



# BRITISH INDIA CLASSICS

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CHARLES GRAY.

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77. Cf. Virgil's picture of the Lapithæ put before a feast of which they are unable to partake, 'A.' vi. 603—

Lucent genialibus altis  
Aurea fulera toris, epulaque ante ora parata  
Regifico luxu.

78. *Rich repast.*] A costly banquet, which none but the wealthy could command. Cf. IV. 17.

79. *Rest.*] Bereft, bereaved. Cf. A.-S. *restian*, to rob, reave. See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 225; ii. 170.

— *Yet.*] His loss of regal dignity notwithstanding.

80. In the passage quoted above from Virgil, 'the eldest of the Furies'—a personification of Famine or Hunger (Servius)—reclines close by, and baffles the expectant banqueters of their feast—

Furiarum maxima juxta

Accenbat et manibns prohibet contingere mensas.

See Prof. Conington's verse translation of the passage, which recalls some of Gray's touches.

81. *Fell.*] Cruel; A.-S. *fell*. Cf. O. Fr. *fel*; It. *fello*; D. *fel*. The word being of Celtic origin, probably *fel*, or *feal*, meaning *bad*.

— *Famine.*] Hunger personified. Cf. Milton, 'P. L.' 845.

— *Scowl.*] The verb must not be regarded as transitive; *smile* is a cognate accusative substituted for 'scowl,' or some similar word, by a poetical artifice amounting to a contradiction in terms. Milton uses the verb transitively with an accusative of the person.

82. *Baleful.*] A.-S. *beal*, *balo*, *balew*. Morris, 'Spec. Early Eng.' p. 383.

— *Baffled.*] Like Tantalus, he devours only with his eyes the rich fare put before him. *Baffle* is generally supposed to exhibit the common frequentative affix -le, but Wedgwood gives a different account.

83. Transition of subject to the ruinous civil wars of York and Lancaster. (G.)

— *Bray.*] An onomatopœia in all probability; see Wedgwood. It is unusual to speak of a noise as *braying*. Asses, men, trumpets, &c. *bray*.

84. The construction is interjectional and loose, though the words are obviously descriptive of close hand-to-hand conflict. See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 218, 234; ii. 98.

85. *Long years.*] A long list of years. *Havoc* is said by Shakspearian editors to be a cry inviting to indiscriminate carnage, and some connect it with *hauck*; see Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 519.

— *Urge their destined course.*] Follow the course pre-ordained by fate. To *urge one's way* is a Latinism (e. g. see Ovid, 'Fasti,' vi. 520) but it is thoroughly naturalised in English. Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 516.

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95. *Accursed.*] Applied vaguely to any instrument of punishment, of divine wrath, or of supernatural destruction.

— *Loom.*] In A.-S. meant simply furniture, and this we may see in the derivative *heir-loom*.

— *Stamp.*] See note on *characters*, v. 52.

— *Ratify.*] Confirm, make sure, seal. Thus we say, ‘a man’s fate is sealed.’

— Strophe iii.

97. This invocation to Edward I. is intentionally abrupt. On *lo*, see note I. i.

98. *Weare ice.*] Let us weave the woof now that the *thread* is spun. See on v. 49.

99. *Half of thy heart.*] Edward’s wife, Eleanor of Castille, daughter of Ferdinand IV., died a few years after the conquest of Wales. (G.) For the story of her heroism and devotion, see School Histories of England.

— *Consecrate.*] We use the word in the sense of devoting to a good service, but Gray has in mind the force of the Lat. *sacer, sacrare, &c.* which applies to bad as well as to good.

100. *Wove.*] Woven is the older and more common form of the participle. Milton uses both (P. L. ix. 839; Son. vi. 2). For other verbs with double forms, see Adams, § 350.

101. Apostrophe of the bard to the companions of his tuneful art who are vanishing from his sight.

— *Forlorn.*] Cf. note on V. 107. It is in agreement with *me* in v. 102.

102. The original reading (see *Various Readings*) was changed by Gray because of the false quantity necessitated by the metre in Caradoc.

103. *Track.*] The broad path of light which the declining sun leaves behind it.

104. *Melt.*] Into unsubstantial air. *From my eyes* must be looked on as applying in some degree to both verbs.

105. The disappearance of the phantasms, with which the bard’s ecstasy had peopled the cliffs, is followed immediately by a glorious vision of unveiled futurity. On the word *scenes*, see a note of Coleridge in the ‘Biog. Lit.’ ch. xx. p. 199.

106. *Glittering skirts.*] *Skirts*, strictly applicable to the loose edge of flowing garments, is figuratively used of anything that may be compared with a sheet of woven fabric. Gray very likely had in mind Milton, ‘P. L.’ iii. 381; cf. also, *ibid.* v. 188.

107. Cf. Dryden’s ‘State of Innocence,’ act iv. sc. i.—

Their glory shoots upon my aching sight.

The eyes *ache* with the effort of gazing on overpoweringly dazzling splendour.

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

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FEW words will be needed to explain to those already familiar with Indian education the aim, range, and plan of the present series. Throughout our Eastern empire, from the upper classes of the high schools to the end of the University course in the Master of Arts' degree, English, as a language and a literature, has been made an essential part of the scheme of public instruction. The attempt has been made, with vigour and success, to impart through the medium of English as high a culture as is attained in this country by the study of the Greek and Latin classics. Many obstacles have opposed themselves to such efforts. It will suffice to mention three:—(1), the want of sound, trustworthy, cheap, convenient texts of authors that are, or ought to be read; (2), the labour both to teacher and student of bringing to bear on particular points philological and critical information scattered irregularly over many volumes; (3), the absence of any authoritative and satisfactory grammar or dictionary. A difficulty of another order, less

5. *Secure.*] Careless; Lat. *se* (privative), *cura*.

6. *Howl.*] Or Howell, as it is sometimes spelt, was one of the Welsh heroes. For a slight and somewhat different account of him, see Southey, 'Madoc in Wales,' pt. ii.

7. *Cian's.*] Pronounced *Kian*.

— *Madoc.*] His father-in-law, of whom he demanded no dowry (v. 8).

9. The sense is not clear at first sight. Par. 'He sued for and won the lovely maid just as she was, adorned with no charms but those given her by nature.'

10. *And had.*] Sell, and icon for his bride.

11. The following is Mr. Morley's literal version of the original of the rest of the poem—

The heroes who marched to Cattrneth were renowned.

Wine and mead out of golden goblets was their beverage.

That year was to them one of high solemnity,

Three hundred and sixty-five chieftains wearing the golden torques.

Of those who hurried forth after the excess of revelling,

But three escaped by valour from the funeral fosso,

The two war-dogs of Aeron and Cynon the Dauntless,

And myself, from the spilling of blood, the reward of my pure song.

— *Cattrneth.*] 1. Cad-træth = war-tract. 2. Cad-rhaith = war-fence. (Morley.)

12. *Thrice two hundred.*] For the exact number, see above.

14. *Chains of regal honour.*] These collars of gold were badges of distinction amongst the different Keltic tribes.

17. Cf. 'The pure beverage of the bee,' IX. 44. Nectar was the drink of the gods in Greek mythology.

18. *Ecstatic.*] Active = producing ecstasy or transport.

19. *Flush'd.*] 'Flushed with victory is animated by it, excited, as if by an increased flow of vital fluids.' (Wedgwood, s. v.)

20. 'Ex iis autem, qui nimis potu madidi ad bellum properabant, non evasere nisi tres.' (Latin version.) With which compare Mr. Morley's translation above.

21. *Conan.*] Or Chynon (Kynon), if spelt according to its pronunciation.

23. *And I, &c.*] 'Et egomet ipso, sanguine rubens; aliter ad hoc carmen compingendum non superstes frisssem.' (Latin version.) Few will deny the superiority of Gray's version to the Latin.

— *Meanest.*] Three words, etymologically distinct, have converged under the form 'mean': 1. A.-S. *mān*, *maene*, *gemene*; O. H. G. *gameli*; N. H. G. *gemein*; Lat. *communis*, common—the adjective we have here. 2. O. and Norm. Fr. *meano*; O. Fr. *meien*, *meien*; N. Fr. *moyen*; Lat. *medianus*—which gives both a substantive and adjective. 3. A.-S. *menan*; O. H. G. *meinan*; N. H. G. *meinen*; O. E. *menen*, to mean or signify.

arduous and now partially overcome, lies in the fact that even in the broadest and most abstract of writers many allusions and many associations foreign to an Oriental may be found, the off-hand explanation of which can scarcely be entrusted to native or even to all English teachers.

It is with a view to remedying in a measure these defects, and after long and careful investigation, that this publication has been undertaken. The general plan of the work may be stated as follows.

In the first place the authors, or extracts from authors to be dealt with, are determined by the selected lists of the Indian Universities, and by the information given in the Reports of the Directors of Public Instruction. Standard classical authors, whose productions are likely to be read frequently and universally, will first receive attention, whilst the restrictions of copyright will for the present impose another limit.

The second point is the choice of a text to reprint from. Care is to be bestowed on discovering what the writer himself considered to be the most satisfactory presentation of his work. This must be reproduced without any unwarrantable change of orthography, punctuation, or arrangement. In some cases it is impossible to pursue this course, and it becomes necessary to compare and collate different editions, throwing various readings into an appendix. Of the volumes now before the public, Scott and

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Thomson's Seasons have been treated according to the former system, the other—namely, Gray's poems—according to the latter.

Thirdly, it is intended that each volume should commence with an introduction biographical and critical, or at all events with some brief notice to prepare the student's mind for the contents of the book. The utterance of any new and unsupported judgment will be, as far as possible, avoided, but the opinions of differing critics must be stated and weighed. It is hoped that in any case some notion will be conveyed of an author's relation to England's intellectual history, even if his absolute merits are wrongly estimated.

The fourth and most important part of the task is the preparation of the commentary. Each annotator is, of course, responsible for his own work, and the strict uniformity which a single mind might observe will be well sacrificed for accumulation of knowledge and economy of time. It is the business of the editor to see that different volumes do not cover the same ground, and that references to books both within and without the series are correct and harmonious, to bear constantly in mind the necessities and capacities of Indian students, and to maintain certain general principles of order in the progress of the series.

The notes are lexical, grammatical, literary, or explanatory of difficulties in the matter. A due proportion must be kept up between these different elements,

but it is obvious that this proportion, as well as the quality of the notes, should vary according to the character of the author and the stage of educational advancement at which he would be read. Points requiring notice in Scott may be passed over in the case of Gray, whilst new classes and new grades of difficulties arise when we come to Milton, Spenser, and Shakspeare, the same shades of distinction holding good with regard to prose writers.

Again, it is useless to presuppose at any level in the present course of instruction a deeper knowledge of English philology or a wider acquaintance with linguistics than is at this moment within the reach of ordinarily intelligent teachers and willing pupils. But a steady forward movement is perceptible in these studies, extending itself into all countries where our language is used or taught, and it is possible that within a reasonable period the facts of Early English and the discovered Laws of Language may be as familiar in some schools as the Greek Dialects and the Principles of Physics have been in others. With this movement it is intended that these notes should advance—neither falling short of it nor outstripping it. Succeeding volumes, whether addressed to higher or lower students, will be built upon those that have gone before them, and so mistakes will be rectified, misconceptions cleared away, and knowledge placed on a more secure and scientific basis. Inasmuch as the commentary will in many cases contain

matter suited to various stages of education, the teacher must exercise a sound discretion in pointing out to his pupils what is essential for them, and so, too, with regard to the many clues given, the many questions barely opened out, he must follow them up or not according to his own judgment and ability. Though sufficient information is supplied for the purpose of comprehending the author, yet the notes have been compiled throughout on the supposition that students are in command of the most ordinary manuals, and that teachers have access to some small library. Perhaps, indeed, there will be no presumption in remarking that, so far as the governmental schools are concerned, the nucleus of a library ought to be insisted upon as indispensable, wherever the teaching of English is carried beyond the merest elements, and that some small proportion of the annual income should be devoted to the purchase of books. The aids absolutely requisite for the proper use of these notes have been reduced to the lowest number possible, but the student must have within reach the smaller dictionary of Ogilvie, Webster, or Chambers (Etymological); Angus' or Latham's Handbook of the English Language; Adams' or Latham's English Grammar (that contained in Angus' Handbook will barely suffice); a manual of analysis such as Morell's; and copies of the works of a few of our greatest writers. A longer list of books for the purpose of reference will be given hereafter.

In treating etymological questions, due care has been exercised to follow up the history of a word as far as possible, rejecting the *à priori* method of Menage, Skinner, and even more modern authorities,—to illustrate and strengthen established principles such as Grimm's Law,—to avoid imparting an unfair bias in matters as yet under dispute such as the radical and imitative theories.

The grammatical portion of the notes has been dealt with from the point of view of Greek and Latin scholarship. Dogmatic and pedantic rules are shunned or pointed out by reference only, whilst it is hoped that some light has been brought to bear on real syntactical difficulties from the laws of natural grammar and the analogy of other languages. In this department, too, the historical mode of enquiry will be adhered to, so far as it has been advanced by the published labours of philologists.

With regard to literary comments and general explanations, it is not easy to speak definitely. The main object has been to state what is put forward in clear simple language, and to support it by reference to received authorities. The pursuit of world-wide thoughts, common-places, turns of phraseology, and peculiarities of style, up to their ultimate origin, has not been altogether neglected, and accuracy has been aimed at in all that relates to history, geography, or science.

It remains to add that the mechanical details of

the work have received their proper share of attention. Type, paper, binding, and size are selected and determined upon with special reference to the means and requirements of the class of students for whom the series is designed, and it is hoped that a volume has been produced serviceable for school-boys and at the same time not unsuited to college use.

In introducing a series of this kind, it is usual to offer some remarks upon any existing works that occupy the same field. These shall be as brief as possible. The numerous annotated editions of standard English authors which the Universities Local Examination Scheme has called into being, seem to fall naturally under two groups—the volumes already issued from the Clarendon Press—the cram-books got up for middle-class schools. Both classes of works are addressed to English teachers and English pupils only, but even setting aside that fact, neither of them satisfies the needs of India in other respects. The aim of the former is too high, whilst the range of the latter is far too low. The British India Classics are intended to fill a middle position between the two, in matter approaching the one, in mode of treatment rising to within a little of the other. It is possible that a publication carried out on such a plan may find favour in some English schools, and this possibility has not been lost sight of in the execution of the work.

In conclusion, the Editor would wish to assure all who are engaged or interested in Indian education that any suggestions or information conducive to the improvement of the series will be thankfully received by him through the medium of the publishers.

## PREFACE.

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THE fact that in this edition the poems of Gray are printed in a different order from that followed in previous editions needs explanation.

In a book designed exclusively for schools and students preparing for a specific examination, the most suitable principle of classification seems to be that which is most intelligible. The poems, therefore, are given in the order in which they were composed.

By introducing the ‘Elegy’ among the Odes, no violence has been done to the principle of natural classification, since, essentially, an Elegy is just as much a lyrical poem as a ‘Hymn to Adversity,’ or an ‘Ode on the Death of a Cat.’ By placing in an Appendix such miscellaneous pieces as could not be classed with strictly lyric poetry, the charge of incongruity has been avoided. The exact or approximate date of composition, wherever it can be ascertained, is appended to each poem.

The text adopted is (with many exceptions, chiefly in elision and punctuation) that of Mitford’s edition (1816), with which several other editions, dated respectively 1768 (first collected edition), 1786, 1800, 1821, 1855, have been compared.

From the edition of Mathias (1814) the Editor has obtained a list of various readings and two or three additions not incorporated in the text.

It is hoped that no apology is necessary for printing the ‘Elegy’ as it was written. Writing to Horace Walpole (Feb. 11, 1751), Gray expressly says: ‘Dodsley

must print it (the ‘Elegy’) *without any interval between the stanzas*, because the sense is in some instances continued beyond them.’

For the notes generally, and especially for the references to parallel passages from ancient and modern authors, the Editor is largely indebted to the commentaries of Wakefield (1786) and Mitford (1816). The illustrative and explanatory notes of the author, some of which have been condensed for the sake of economising space, are distinguished by a (G).

As an analysis of the metres used by Gray has been given, no explanation of metrical peculiarities will be found in the notes.

The biographical sketch is based on the correspondence as published by Mitford, and dates have been given in most cases.

Lastly, the critical introduction is a systematic attempt—which does not pretend to be exhaustive—to point out to the student the attitude of past and contemporary criticism towards the poems of Gray, and to give some materials for forming an independent conclusion.

OXFORD: 1868.

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#### NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

A FEW verbal corrections have been made in this edition and one or two notes have been added, for which the annotator is indebted to the kindness of the Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford. Otherwise the book remains unchanged.

LONDON: April 14, 1871.

# INTRODUCTION.

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## I.

### BIOGRAPHICAL.

MR. PHILIP GRAY was a money-scrivener,<sup>1</sup> who exercised his calling in Cornhill, London, where his son Thomas was born, December 26, 1716. Of twelve children he alone survived his infancy, owing his escape from the fate of the rest to the uncommon nerve of his mother, who, by opening a vein with her own hand, prevented his suffocation.

At the usual age young Gray was sent to Eton, where his mother's brother, Mr. Antrobus, was an assistant-master. His education at Eton, and afterwards at Cambridge, he owed to the self-denying liberality of his mother, as his father's churlish temperament, soured perhaps by the loss of eleven children, prompted him to withhold all pecuniary support from the boy while at school and college. Besides acquiring the trick of Latin versification and such other 'humane' accomplishments as young gentlemen commonly devote their school-days to learning and their college-days to forgetting, Gray formed at Eton the friendship of Horace Walpole<sup>2</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> A money-scrivener is a broker whose business it is to raise money for others, and to draw up commercial or mercantile securities.

<sup>2</sup> The witty, cynical, worldly, selfish letter-writer. His voluminous correspondence extends over the last half of the eighteenth century, and contains a vast amount of historical information, political gossip, and social scandal. Before his death he became Earl of Orford.

Richard West—two names ever memorable to the student of Gray's correspondence.

In 1734, at the age of eighteen, he left Eton for Cambridge, entering at his uncle's college, Peterhouse, Walpole going to King's in the same university, and West to Christ Church, Oxford. From the correspondence which passed between these gifted youths while studying on the classic banks of Cam and Isis, one might be tempted to infer that the two universities, during the first half of the eighteenth century, hardly realised the idea of nurseries of genius or seats of learning. West, so far from being awed by his connection with the princely foundation of Christ Church, talks (in a letter to Gray) of living 'in a strange country, inhabited by things that call themselves Doctors and Masters of Arts ; a country flowing with syllogisms and ale, where Horace and Virgil are equally unknown.' It is clear that for West, at all events, Oxford was not the land of promise. Still more lugubrious is the strain of poor Gray writing from Cambridge to complain that his bosom friends and companions—the classical writers of antiquity—had 'fallen into great contempt with most people,' and sighing for the day when release from forced attendance at lectures and other college 'impertinencies' should leave him free to abandon himself once more to that society for which alone he had any taste. He even goes so far as to claim for his own university the famous prophecy touching the doom of Babylon, uttered of old by the Hebrew Isaiah (xxxiv. 11-15).

Neither Gray nor West seems to have possessed the slightest taste or capacity for mathematical or metaphysical studies; and if we remember that Newton at the one university, and Aristotle at the other, had almost exclusive possession of the field, we shall not be surprised that neither of these young men found at college that congenial society which he craved. Add to this that Gray was never fond of society—he was always too

much of the student for that—and that West rarely enjoyed a day's unbroken health, and their position becomes intelligible. What seem less intelligible are the motives which led them both to choose of all professions the Common Law.

Quitting Cambridge without a degree in the autumn of 1738, Gray returned to his father's house in Corhill, with the intention of removing on the first opportunity into chambers in the Inner Temple. This plan, however, Horace Walpole anticipated by inviting his school companion to join him in making the 'grand tour' of Europe, then held to be an almost indispensable prelude to a parliamentary career. Walpole's choice of a travelling companion was most unfortunate. It would be difficult to conceive two young men more ill-assorted in temper, habits, and inclinations than Walpole, a frank, gay, and somewhat frivolous lover of pleasure, and Gray, a thoughtful, over-sensitive, fastidious bookworm.

Early in 1739 the friends set out on their travels, wandering leisurely through France into Italy, Walpole throwing himself eagerly into the dissipations of the gay society in which he found himself, while Gray was revelling with young enthusiasm amid scenes long since familiar to him as a student, and writing home glowing descriptions of all that he saw and did to his parents, and, above all, to his bosom friend, West.

While they were in Italy the pope, Clement XII., died, and Gray hastened to Rome, eager to witness the installation of his successor. This was in April (1740), and in July of the same year he writes to his father that the conclave of cardinals was in greater uncertainty than ever, 'nobody dreaming of an election till the end of September.' A month later the new pope, Benedict XIV., was elected, of whom Gray sent his mother a very lively sketch. Eleven months were passed at Florence, and in the following summer (1741) the travellers prepared to return to England. But at Reggio an

open rupture between them took place, and Gray, thrown on his own slender resources, proceeded homewards with a single lacquey, going out of his way to revisit the Grande Chartreuse, where in the album of the Fathers he wrote his famous Alcaic Ode.

Arriving in London on September 1, he found his father's health fast giving way before repeated attacks of gout, and had been with him scarcely two months when he died. Thanks to his father's indolence and unthrift, young Gray found himself, at the age of twenty-six, destitute of the means of prosecuting his legal studies without the assistance of his mother and aunt. Both these ladies had by their independent efforts in trade secured a competency, and would have pressed him to draw on their common fund. But Gray, too proud to accept alms even from his mother, and too generous to wound her by refusing, evaded the difficulty by removing to Cambridge on the plea that he wished to study the civil law. But he did not carry out this plan until after the death of West, whose constitution, never robust, had too quickly succumbed to an unkindly climate and too laborious study. Leaving London in March 1742, West retired to the country seat of a friend in Hertfordshire, where in the June following he died. The letters of the two friends during these few months reflect the genuine tenderness of Gray's nature, and lead us to regret the premature decay of one whose powers were, in the opinion of competent judges, scarcely inferior to those of his friend. A peculiar interest will always attach to the 'Ode on the Spring,' which heads Gray's collection of poems, from the circumstance that it was written while West lay on his death-bed, and was actually sent for his approval by Gray, arriving too late to find him alive.

In the same year, besides the sonnet on the death of West, Gray composed the 'Ode on the Distant Prospect of Eton College,' the 'Hymn to Adversity,' and the

exordium of a philosophic poem in Latin, ‘*De Principiis Cogitandi*.’

From this time to his death he lived for the most part at Cambridge, passing the vacations with his mother and aunts at Stoke Pogeis, near Windsor, and after their deaths, with his friends in different parts of the country. Between the years 1759 and 1762 he lived principally in London, having taken lodgings close to the newly opened British Museum, for the purpose of consulting the Harleian and other MSS.

In 1747 he composed, at the request of Walpole—with whom he had become reconciled in 1744—an ‘*Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat*,’ an effusion which never satisfied himself, and which is no great addition to his poetic fame. In 1748 he wrote the fragment of a didactic poem ‘*On the Alliance of Education and Government*,’ and two years later put the finishing touch to the immortal ‘*Elegy*.’

In 1756 Gray removed from his own college to Pembroke Hall, fairly driven away by the persecution of certain ‘young barbarians’ who resented the intrusion of an eccentric fastidious student on their noisy bacchanalian society. His choice of Pembroke Hall as his new abode was probably determined by the fact that Mason, his friend and afterwards his biographer, was a fellow of that society. In 1757 he published the ‘*Bard*,’ and the ‘*Progress of Poesy*,’ though the latter had been finished in 1755, and in the same year was offered the Laureateship vacant by the death of Cibber. But Gray promptly declined an office which in his own mind was inseparably associated with meanness, incompetence, and profligacy. He couched his refusal, however, in the most courteous terms, and expressed a hope that some person might be found ‘to retrieve the credit of the thing.’ A Mr. Whitehead was found willing to accept the laurels, and Gray resumed his literary toil.

In 1762, on his return from the British Museum, he

applied without success for the vacant Professorship of Modern Languages and History at Cambridge, the patronage of which lay for that time with Lord Bute.<sup>1</sup> Three years later he went on an antiquarian tour through Scotland, making among other friendships that of the amiable poet Beattie,<sup>2</sup> whom he afterwards allowed to print his poems at the University press of Glasgow. It was on his return from this tour that he wrote the Odes adapted from the Norse and Welsh.

In 1768 the Professorship which, six years before, Gray had solicited in vain, was conferred on him unasked by the Duke of Grafton.<sup>3</sup> This preferment, being virtually a sinecure, not only made him comfortable and set at rest all anxiety on the score of income, but left him ample leisure to devote himself to botany, zoology, and the other multifarious studies, for which his appetite seems to have been insatiable.

The Duke of Grafton's installation as Chancellor of the University gave occasion to an ode for music by Gray, which was performed in the Senate House, July 1, 1769. The mention of an ode for music reminds one that Gray had inherited from his father considerable musical talent, and was no mean performer on the harpsichord, besides being a first-rate vocalist.

His next excursion from Cambridge was among the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and among his published correspondence are several letters to his friend

<sup>1</sup> The unpopular prime minister by whom the peace of Paris (Feb. 1763) was negotiated. Against this statesman the efforts of Wilkes were chiefly directed. See Student's *Hume*, c. xxxi. § 3, et seq., and Junius' *Letters*, Bohn's Edition, vol. ii. p. 118, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Beattie's chief poem, *The Minstrel*, was published in 1770 and 1774. In style he resembles Thomson, but falls far short of him in power. See Craik's *English Literature and Language*, p. 394.

<sup>3</sup> This nobleman was a member of the ministry from 1765 to 1770, and for the last two years of that period was at the head of affairs. He fell under the lash of Junius, and his policy followed by that of his successor, Lord North, led to the American War of Independence. See Student's *Hume*, c. xxxi. § 7, et seq., and Junius' *Letters*, *passim*.

Dr. Wharton,<sup>1</sup> which record his impressions of those ever interesting scenes, and which are perhaps the best specimens of his descriptive powers in prose.

In May 1771 he began to complain of a violent cough and low spirits, and when, added to these, some flying visits of gout warned him that habitual temperance is not proof against hereditary taint, he resigned his Professorship and removed to London for medical advice. The air of Kensington proved so invigorating, that in a few weeks he was able to resume his labours at Cambridge, and even meditated an excursion to the seat of Dr. Wharton. But disappointment was again in store for him. On July 24 he was seized with violent sickness when dining in the college hall, and though remedies were promptly applied, all were of no avail. On the 29th convulsions came on, which, lasting two days, proved too much for his strength, and on the last day of the month he died. He was buried by his mother's side in Stoke churchyard.

Such is the outline of a life of fifty-five years, a life which offers little or no dramatic interest, and which leaves on the mind an impression of splendid abilities, not to say genius, wholly misdirected. Here was a man who, we cannot but think, had it in his power to inaugurate a new era in English poetry, and to dethrone once for all the miserable upstarts who vaunted themselves to be the legitimate heirs of Alexander Pope. And what did he achieve? He spent the best years of his life in such work as the veriest bookworm would have done almost as well, poring over MSS., diving into curious tomes of heraldry and archæology, and acquiring such a stock of erudition on botany and zoology as would have enriched the lectures of half-a-dozen professors. Latin verses, as we have seen, he had learned to make at Eton, and for some years he seems to have been of Dr. Johnson's opinion, that

<sup>1</sup> Not to be confounded with either of the brothers Warton, the celebrated critics and poets, who were also Gray's contemporaries.

'he would do well to stick to them.' At least it seems certain that he never seriously thought of devoting himself to the task of raising the tone of English poetry, and if this was the indirect effect of the few and, too often, fragmentary poems which, with some diffidence and a good deal of contempt, he gave to the world, it is due solely to their intrinsic merit. Let us not, however, do him injustice. If he made little use of the splendid opportunities which lay within his reach, and if, by bestowing on less worthy objects the labour which should have been devoted to the most exalted, he has incurred the charge of spoiling a noble career; on the other hand, let us not forget that his pursuits were pure, honourable, and unselfish, while his unobtrusive student-life will always remain a standing protest against mammon-worship. 'To silence one's genius,' says Mr. Matthew Arnold, 'is better than to hackney it.' It is to Gray's credit that he chose the less objectionable alternative.

As a son he was more than an unnatural father could expect—all that an affectionate mother could desire. What he was as a friend his letters to West, Mason, and Dr. Wharton, among others, sufficiently testify. That he was cold, and even supercilious, to strangers may be forgiven him. Possessing ample resources within himself, he never taxed the good nature of others; and the same forbearance which he extended to mankind he claimed for himself. We have his own authority for stating that he believed in a God; of the purity of his life there has never existed the faintest suspicion. Even Dr. Johnson turns with regret from the contemplation of a life for which he, of all men, must have felt some respect, to the criticism of those poems which he alone, of all men, has ventured to rank scarcely above the exercises of a schoolboy.

## II.

## CRITICAL.

If the foregoing sketch has succeeded in conveying a faithful reflection of the personal character and life of Gray, the student is prepared to enter upon a critical survey of the poetical compositions on which Gray's fame depends. To enlist the reader's sympathies on the side of Gray's enthusiastic admirers, or to bias his judgment by a detailed enumeration of faulty passages, is not the aim of the following Essay, which professes simply to furnish such materials as may assist the intelligent student to form an independent estimate of the positive value of Gray's poems as contributions to English literature, and to determine the place which he occupies in the literary history of the eighteenth century.

On the threshold of this inquiry, it is worth while to notice the attitude of public feeling towards the compositions of Gray on and after their first appearance. The only one of his poems which achieved an immediate and wide-spread popularity—the ‘Elegy’—owed its success, at least in its author’s opinion, rather to the subject than to the form of treatment. Far from being elated by his unsought reputation, Gray contemptuously remarked that an ‘Elegy’ would have suited the popular taste equally well if it had been written in prose.<sup>1</sup> But whatever may have been the cause, the fact of his popularity was undeniable, and expressed itself in the demand (1775) for a new edition of the author’s works, containing the other pieces which, originally written with no definite view to publication, had from time to time found their way into the fashionable miscellanies of the day.

The task of editing was undertaken by William Mason,

<sup>1</sup> Forbes’s *Life of Beattie*, vol. i. p. 80.

Gray's friend and literary admirer; nor, to judge by Mason's antecedents and opportunities of authentic information, could it have been placed in better hands, though he abused his privilege as editor with a license which no degree of intimacy could justify.<sup>1</sup> In 1781 Dr. Johnson, then more than seventy years of age, completed his 'Lives of the Poets,' in which series were included Gray's principal compositions, prefaced by a biographical and critical essay. That the lyrical pieces of Gray were within ten years of the author's death held worthy of a place beside some of the master-pieces of our literature, is significant of the general feeling at the time. The instinct which gauges an author's merit by the demand for new editions of his works, prompted the London publishers to recognise the claims to classical rank which Mason, Potter, and others had for years been industriously putting forward in Gray's behalf, and Johnson was requested to do for Gray what he had done for Milton, Dryden, and Pope. The spirit in which he set about the execution of this task may be seen by any one who will spend an hour over one of the most trenchant and superficial criticisms ever penned, and one which has—unduly, perhaps, but unquestionably—damaged the great critic's reputation.

Dr. Johnson's animosity to Gray, and to the poetic school of which Gray, with Collins and Mason, may be taken as the chief representative, admits of a ready explanation. In the first place, Johnson was incapable of appreciating, and, therefore, of criticising with patience the poetry which appealed rather to the passions than to the reason, which, while it touched the heart, often failed to satisfy the head. Secondly, to his original heresy of ignoring the dominant style of poetry, and of discarding the favourite metre—the ten-syllable couplet—Gray had added the crime of raising the popular taste

<sup>1</sup> See the preface to Mitford's Edition, 1816.

by creating a demand for poetry not written in imitation of Pope.<sup>1</sup> Now, had Gray's compositions met with the indifference or the contempt which upon Johnson's principles was only what they deserved, Johnson would have forgiven the poet his literary heresy, satisfied with having helped to consign him to oblivion. But when in several quarters 'hardy champions' started up, resolved to rescue their favourite author from neglect, and when many, who on the first publication of the 'Bard' and 'Progress of Poesy' had been 'content to gaze in mute amazement,' were in a short time 'content to be shown beauties which they could not see,'<sup>2</sup> Johnson, unable any longer to endure so daring a violation of the majesty of criticism, determined to sneer Gray down. He was furnished with an occasion by the publishers when they engaged him to write a critique on Gray's life and poetry. We may take leave of Dr. Johnson with these words of a greater critic than he:—'I know nothing,' said Coleridge,<sup>3</sup> 'that surpasses the vileness of deciding on the merits of a poet or a painter (not by characteristic defects; for where there is genius, these always point to his characteristic beauties; but) by accidental failures or faulty passages, except the impudence of defending it as the proper duty and most instructive part of criticism.'

The reform begun by Gray, Mason, and Goldsmith, by Percy in his 'Reliques,' by Thomas Warton in his 'History of Poetry,' and carried on by Cowper and Bowles during the last quarter of the century, bore a rich harvest in the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, who in their turn have given, each in his own way, a colour to the best poetry of our own time. When a great critic like Coleridge—to whom the modes

<sup>1</sup> See Southey's sketch of the progress of poetry from Chaucer to Cowper; *Cowper's Works*, vol. ii. chap. xii. p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*: Gray.

<sup>3</sup> *Biographia Literaria* (Bell and Daldy, 1867), chap. iii., p. 30.

of eighteenth-century thinking were in the highest degree distasteful, and whose own life was a protest against the system which was their logical result—pointed out<sup>1</sup> with keen insight and in epigrammatic periods the characteristic blemishes of the *Gallic* school of English poetry, and its essential inferiority to the *Italian* school which it supplanted, such destructive criticism could hardly fail to create an impulse directly opposite to the tendency of the decried school. Accordingly, we find that among the more intelligent of the then rising generation the poetic literature of the eighteenth century fell into great contempt, and of course Gray shared the common fate.

That Coleridge, by thus classing the poetry of Gray with the bulk of the stuff with which the market was over-stocked between the time of Pope's ascendancy and the publication of Cowper's 'Task,' failed to do justice to the negative excellence of Gray—his non-conformity to a prevalent but debased fashion—is now seen and acknowledged by candid minds. Nor have there been wanting in the present day indications of a reaction—possibly in favour of eighteenth-century philosophy, with which we are not concerned—decidedly in favour of eighteenth-century literature. Begun in France—the native soil of luminous criticism—this reaction has for some time been visible in the best English culture, and one English critic,<sup>2</sup> who is most entitled to a respectful hearing, has openly asserted the transcendent merits of a poet to whose defects the eyes of the intelligent were long since opened by Coleridge. It must not be inferred from this that there exists a tendency to undervalue the reformation in the national taste to which Cowper's best poetry gave a lasting impulse, or that the style of poetry of which Gray is an ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Biog. Lit.* chap. i. *passim*.

\* *Essays in Criticism*, by Matthew Arnold (Macmillan, 1865), p. 82.

ponent is likely in the present day to be revived. It is the business of true criticism to adjust the balance of conflicting opinions, to put the merits of the eighteenth-century literature on a truer footing, to judge its poetry from a positive rather than a comparative point of view. It was in this spirit that an eminent French critic<sup>1</sup> remarked not long ago that, ‘after all, the age of Swift, Thomson, Pope, and Gray was an age fruitful of good and rich literature, which, if it fell short of sublimity and *souffle*, could lay part of the blame—where it is laid by Mr. Matthew Arnold—on the inadequacy of the only “vehicle” which was at its disposal.’ For assuming it to be true that in poetical composition each writer has very restricted liberty of choice as to the channel in which his genius may find an outlet, what is the necessary consequence of such a restriction? The intending poet has, on the one hand, the alternative of accepting the established metre of his age; and, on the other hand, that of discarding it in favour of some other metre which, however generally it may have been employed in past ages, or however universally it may be employed by a future age, is not the recognised metre for the time being. Let the poet, then, close with the former alternative, and bring the full powers of his genius to bear upon the established metre—in that case his attainment or non-attainment of the highest measure of success depends on the adequacy or inadequacy of that metre as the vehicle of high poetry. But let him, on the other hand, refuse to avail himself of the recognised metre of his age, and to give his genius free issue in the channel already dug by the labours of predecessors—for him, whatever his natural force may be, the highest measure of success is unattainable.

Now in this criticism Mr. Arnold<sup>2</sup> gives us the key

<sup>1</sup> M. Louis Étienne, in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, April and August, 1866.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Essays, &c.* pp. 81-3.

to Gray's position as a poet. Living, as he did, at a time when the genius of Pope had stamped itself in deep characters on the poetic literature of the century, and early imbibing the profoundest reverence for the poetry of Dryden—his obligations to whom he always acknowledged in the most emphatic terms<sup>1</sup>—we should naturally expect that Gray, if impelled to creative effort, would in obeying the impulse have adopted the metre which he found made ready to his hand, and which had been brought by the skill of a master to the highest point of mechanical perfection. But on looking through the scanty remains which keep his name alive, we discover but a solitary instance of his having employed the ten-syllable couplet, and there it is not the metre as we find it in the hands of Pope, but as it had been left by Dryden. The student will see in the fragment ‘On the Alliance of Education and Government’ the first instalment of an elaborate design which Gray with characteristic fastidiousness abandoned on the publication of Montesquieu’s ‘Esprit des Lois,’ alleging that the French philosopher had anticipated some of his leading thoughts. The truth is that Gray was ready to avail himself of any plausible pretext for getting rid of a task to which he brought the method and the traditions of his lyrical poems, and from which he had learned by experience that the system of constant retouching and careful elaboration, so successful with the ‘Odes’ and the ‘Elegy,’ became, when applied to a long philosophical treatise in heroic verse, if not impracticable, an insupportable burden. With this single exception Gray never employed the heroic couplet—the metre which Pope had made for him, as for others, the almost inevitable vehicle—but confined himself to perfecting the existing lyrical metres and naturalising others hitherto unattempted in the language. And herein we see the reason why Gray, though ‘the English

<sup>1</sup> A letter of Gray's to the poet Beattie ends thus:—

‘Remember Dryden, and be blind to all his faults.’

poet of the eighteenth century whose compositions wear best, and give one the most entire satisfaction,' is still regarded by the critic as 'a poetical nature repressed and without free issue.'<sup>1</sup>

Accepting this explanation of Gray's position, and bearing in mind that in the few short compositions which he has left us, however 'exquisite' in the opinion of good judges they may be, his genius did not have full play, we have now to inquire the positive value of these productions, their characteristic merits and defects.

Here, too, if we would form anything like an impartial judgment, we must not lose sight of the personal character and peculiar education of the poet. If we recall the facts that at Eton he acquired a general love of classical learning, and an extraordinary facility in turning Latin verses; that at Cambridge his distaste for the studies and amusements of the place drove him into closer communion with his books; that a singular reserve and fastidiousness prompted him when in society to sink the scholar and the poet in the well-bred, *dilettante* man of leisure—if we remember all this, we shall be at no loss to understand why the monuments of his genius and his encyclopædic learning are so few and imperfect, why nearly every line of his 'Odes' and 'Elegy' bears traces of an over-nice, almost effeminate, taste, which could not tolerate an uncouth sound and shrank from using any phrase unsupported by the authority of some previous writer.

Dr. Johnson has dismissed some of the 'Odes' as if they were the tasks of a schoolboy.<sup>2</sup> Such a criticism, though from him it was no more than a sneer, is not altogether unwarranted by the facts. Poems like the ode 'On the Spring,' or that 'On a Distant Prospect of Eton,' are not the exercises of a schoolboy, because in a

<sup>1</sup> Mr. M. Arnold, *Essays, &c.* as above.

<sup>2</sup> See in particular his criticisms on the 'Ode on the Death of a Cat.'

schoolboy's exercises we do not look for perfection; and these 'Odes' of Gray are in their way perfect. But they are written as a schoolboy would write them if he could, as Gray himself would have written them when a sixth-form boy at Eton. Nor is the explanation of this far to seek. Gray prided himself, not without reason, on his nice and accurate taste in Latin verse composition, and, we are told by his critics,<sup>1</sup> even entertained the idea at one time of throwing all his energies into that channel. We are not surprised, then, if, in a fit of inspiration, or rather when external circumstances afforded an occasion—as in the year 1742, when the death of Richard West called forth a sonnet and two odes—he was unable to throw off the traditional associations which cluster about all composition in a dead language, and was more careful to write a poem nearly every line of which should echo some familiar or half-forgotten beauty in a classical or modern author, than he was to give free play to his imagination, or to strike a note which might startle by its novelty. It is necessary, if we would fairly estimate the bulk of his poems, to realise this peculiarity in the method of their composition. Nor is what has been said equivalent to a charge of simple plagiarism. For Gray, whose sense of honour was as nice as his taste was fastidious, scrupulously furnished his readers with such passages as he was at the time of composition conscious of having imitated, and these references successive editors have commonly preserved. Wherever, therefore, the poet has not himself given the source from which either his thought or his language is borrowed, there we may be sure that he was no conscious imitator, however closely his language may resemble or even coincide with that of some previous writer. Any one who is curious to learn the number of these unconscious

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Johnson, as quoted above.

imitations may gather from the various commentaries<sup>1</sup> abundant material for satisfying his curiosity, and will find his estimate of Gray as a poet raised or lowered just as he may happen to regard the lack of originality in an English poem as a fundamental defect or an accidental blemish.

It has been said above that Gray applied his method of composing in Latin to the composition of lyric poems in English. What that method commonly is, needs not to be explained to the initiated. Most of those who have conquered the difficulties of scansion and quantity are familiar with the 'Gradus ad Parnassum' and with its short and easy method of supplying a sterile imagination with an assortment of epithets, synonyms, and fag-ends of lines.<sup>2</sup> The substitute for this degrading mechanical device is a well-stored and retentive memory. This substitute Gray possessed, and knew how to use to the best advantage. Nor need we find it hard to conceive that he should have written scores of lines which betray an intimate familiarity with previous literature, without being at all conscious of having drawn upon any special source of inspiration. Indeed we have only to examine his own notions of what the language of poetry ought to be, to see that such unconscious imitations were, in his opinion, so many proofs of an adherence to a correct 'poetic diction.' In a letter to West (April, 1742) he writes:—'The language of the age is never the language of poetry; except among the French, whose verse, where the thought or image does not support it, differs in nothing from prose. *Our poetry*, on the contrary, *has a language peculiar to itself*; to which almost every one that has written has added something by enriching it with foreign idioms and derivatives, nay, sometimes words of their own composition and invention.'

Now, however truthful this theory may seem as an

<sup>1</sup> Some of these have been enumerated in the Preface.

<sup>2</sup> See a curious note in Coleridge's *Biog. Lit.* p. 10.

historical account of the English poetry before his own day, to what, if we express it in other words, do we find it equivalent? ‘To English poetry it is essential not only that the thoughts and images should be poetical, but that the language should be poetical also. And by a “poetical language” is meant a diction which is the common property of successive poets, and remote alike from colloquial phraseology and from written prose.’ If this is a fair statement of Gray’s poetical theory, what follows, we may ask, from such a principle as this involves? On these conditions it would be possible for any educated man, with a good memory, a cultivated taste, and a talent for imitation, to become a poet, or at least to write what should pass current as good poetry. With such a theory of poetry generally accepted and followed out, it is no matter for surprise if compositions of the eighteenth-century poets were characterised for the most part ‘not so much by poetic thoughts, as by thoughts translated into the language of poetry,’<sup>1</sup> or if, to use the words of a French critic,<sup>2</sup> ‘a sort of bed of Procrustes seems to have been the fatal measure of all works of that period.’

When we come to inquire into the characteristic excellences of Gray’s poetry, that which strikes us first, not less prominently in the ‘Elegy’ than in the ‘Odes,’ is *the musical sweetness of the versification*. If Coleridge was right in regarding ‘the sense of musical delight and the power of producing it’ as an infallible mark of original poetic genius,<sup>3</sup> it will not be difficult to make good one of the claims which Gray possesses to the title of a born poet. In support of this claim, it is sufficient to point to the ‘Pindaric Odes,’ and in particular to the first epode of the ‘Progress of Poesy,’—on ‘the power of harmony to produce all the graces of motion in the body.’

<sup>1</sup> *Biog. Lit.* p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> M. Louis Etienne, *Revue des deux Mondes*, August, 1866.

<sup>3</sup> *Biog. Lit.* chap. xv. p. 151.

In the first three lines of that epode the effect of rapid, *saltatory* motion is produced by dropping the initial syllable necessary to an octo-syllabic line; the presence of the syllable in v. 4, and the regular verse of three feet which follows, prepare the ear for a transition to a still livelier movement, effected by a change not of cadence, but of accent, and by the addition of a super-numerary syllable. This frisky movement gives place at v. 12 to the dignified movement of the heroic ten-syllable verse, abounding in spondees, and balanced, as in the ‘Elegy,’ by alternate rhymes. The ear having been prepared by these nicely-poised heroics for the climax of interest—the advent of the queen of love—the stanza winds up with the imposing pomp of the Alexandrine. The point to which the student should direct his attention here, is that this illustration of the flexibility of language, this striking effect of variety, is produced by strictly legitimate means, and without disfiguring the symmetry of the poem by resorting to a change of *cadence*. The absence of the same self-restraint in the ‘Odes on St. Cecilia’s Day’ by Dryden and Pope, where an imitative effect is produced by the alternation of cadence, proves those great poets either to have been ignorant of the fundamental principle that ‘poetry is an imitative, not a deceptive, art’—an absurd hypothesis—or to have been more desirous of producing a certain effect than scrupulous in the means which they adopted to produce it. For other examples of Gray’s ‘power of giving musical delight’ the student should compare, in particular, the last epode of the same ode, the third antistrophe of the ‘Bard,’ and the ‘Elegy,’ *passim*.<sup>1</sup>

Again, no intelligent reader will fail to recognise in the ‘Odes’ and ‘Elegy’ the pervading presence of what

<sup>1</sup> Most of the above remarks are borrowed, in substance, from the Critical Dissertation in Mitford’s Edition.

Coleridge<sup>1</sup> calls a *meditative* or *philosophic* as opposed to a purely *human pathos*. Gray, like Wordsworth, was a recluse, and contemplated the fierce struggle ever going on in the world with the ‘sober eye’ of an outside spectator, free from the distorting medium of passion, unbiased by personal participation in the strife. It has been well said of him that ‘he loved scholar-like calm and quiet inaction, his very greatness depended on his *not acting*, on his “wise passiveness,” on his indulging the grave idleness which so well appreciates so much of human life.’ Gray’s poetry is no mere autobiography; he does not strip off the veil which conceals his inner feelings and lay them bare to the gaze of public curiosity, as Cowper in his most pathetic pieces has done: but, being gifted by nature with sensibility quick and deep, his tendency is rather to dwell on the frail side of humanity with something of that pessimism which runs through the poetry of Lucretius and Virgil. When Gray, in meditative mood, gives utterance to the thoughts suggested by the contemplation of the outer world, it is not ‘the public’ whom he takes into his confidence, it is ‘the Muse,’ who sits with him, and thinks

How vain the ardour of the crowd,  
How low, how little are the proud,  
How indigent the great!

*Ode on Spring*, 18-20.

A third characteristic excellence in the poetry of Gray, which could not escape the most careless reader, is the *exquisite felicity of expression*. Gray has the art of condensing into a line or a stanza some thought or image—none the less valuable for not being his own—which it would be impossible to express differently without loss of force and propriety. If nothing else could be said in proof of this statement, it would suffice to point to the

<sup>1</sup> In his critique on Wordsworth’s poetry, *Biog. Lit.* chap. xxii., p. 231.

expressions which have long since passed into common-places or 'household words,' taking rank with some of Solomon's proverbs and the profound truths which lie scattered over the plays of Shakspeare. (Perhaps no author is more often quoted by persons who deal much in saws, and who, in many cases, are ignorant of the source from which the familiar truths are derived. Among many examples we may select at hazard the following:—

Thought would destroy their paradise.  
No more:—where ignorance is bliss  
    'Tis folly to be wise.

*On a Distant Prospect of Eton, 98-100.*

Teach me to love and to forgive,  
    Exact my own defects to scan;  
What others are to feel and know myself a man.

*To Adversity, 46-48.*

Yet shall he mount and keep his distant way  
    Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,  
Beneath the good how far!—but far above the great.

*Progress of Poesy, 121-3.*

Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short and simple annals of the poor.

*Elegy, 31. 32.*

Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

*Ibid. 55, 56.*

Many more such couplets could be quoted from the 'Elegy,' which seem—to borrow the expression of one of Gray's editors<sup>1</sup>—'as if they had been carefully and consciously chiselled for immortality, to become mottoes for every churchyard.'

It is when we begin to look for the characteristic defects of Gray's poetry that our task becomes somewhat invidious. But if the remarks made in the course of this Essay on the method which Gray brought to the

<sup>1</sup> Rev. George Gilfillan.

composition of lyric poetry have been intelligible, the reader ought to find no difficulty in tracing the defects which disfigure some of the choicest poems of their kind to the fundamental error which has been pointed out as underlying in Gray's poetical theory.

The most patent of these defects is the *tendency to clothe thoughts obvious, and even trite, in language disproportionately elaborate and luxuriant.*

If a man has a mind to put undeniable platitudes into metrical dress, no one can justly find fault with his ambition, provided the outside be as plain and unpretending as that which it enshrines. Nor, again, is there anything intrinsically objectionable in highly rich and ornamental diction, which is the appropriate vehicle for conveying gorgeous images and thoughts of exalted sublimity.

But the poet who uses such language as the vehicle of thoughts which are not new, or of images which are not poetical, is guilty of *bombast*—and a species of bombast, moreover, which is very far from indicating genius in the author who employs it. What Coleridge called 'mental bombast'<sup>1</sup> is a very different fault—being the use of thoughts and images which are above the subject of description—and is one of which, in the same critic's opinion, none but a man of genius is capable.

A second defect which critics have professed to find in the 'Odes,' but especially in the prophetic ode,—the 'Bard,'—is that of *obscurity*. And here it is desirable to clear the question of some irrelevant matter. No charge is more often or more glibly made against poets than this of obscurity. Now it is incumbent on all who accuse Gray of this fault to define what they mean by obscurity, and to maintain the charge by citing passages which illustrate it. If, then, it were said that Gray is obscure because he habitually employs tortuous or in-

<sup>1</sup> *Biog. Lit.* chap. xxii. p. 221.

volved expressions, or is liable to a confusion of ideas, it would be necessary to quote several passages in which these faults are exhibited. But, without denying that isolated instances of obscurity, due to the causes alleged, do occur in the 'Odes,' it would be easy to show that such instances are not numerous enough, in proportion to the number of the entire poems, to constitute a *characteristic* defect.

But to those whose accusation of obscurity arises from their incapacity to understand the poet's meaning in a poem like the 'Bard,' a very simple answer may be returned. This answer Gray has given in the motto to the 'Pindaric Odes';—'Vocal to the intelligent, for the many they need interpreters.' Those who look for the same simplicity of expression in a poem full of historical allusions, or embodying highly abstract truths, which they rightly expect in a ballad, are self-convicted of absurdity. Coleridge's defence of himself from this same charge of obscurity may be used in behalf of Gray:—'If any man expect from my poems the same easiness of style which he admires in a drinking song, for him I have not written: "Intelligibilia, non intellectum adsero."'<sup>1</sup>

But there is another charge which has been urged with more reason against the poetry of Gray—*a vague use of personifications*. Any one who is disposed to think this charge unfair ought to find no difficulty in determining with precision what are intended as personifications, and what are mere abstract nouns. Most readers, however, and Coleridge among the number, have admitted the difficulty of deciding in many instances. Quoting the celebrated simile from the 'Bard' (71-6), Coleridge bases his preference for the original of those lines in Shakespeare 'on the ground that it depended wholly on the compositor's putting, or not putting, a small capital both

<sup>1</sup> 'I bring you what may be understood, not Understanding.' See conclusion of his preface to his collected poems, edited by Derwent Coleridge.

in this and in many other passages of the same poet, whether the words should be personifications or mere abstracts.<sup>1</sup> The same critic goes on to trace the vague use of 'this, the highest species of metaphor'<sup>2</sup> as part of the machinery of poetry, to the associations inseparable from the art of Latin versification.

Here, then, ends the task of supplying *data* from which independent conclusions may be drawn by the student, who is referred for detailed criticism to the notes in this volume, and to the authorities mentioned and quoted from in the present Essay.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Biog. Lit.* chap. i. p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> See Professor Masson's *Essays chiefly on English Poets* (Macmillan, 1856), p. 441.

<sup>3</sup> To which should be added the critical summary to Book iv. of Mr. Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*.

THE POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
THOMAS GRAY.

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I.

ODE ON THE SPRING.

Lo ! where the rosy-bosom'd Hours,  
Fair Venus' train, appear ;  
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,  
And wake the purple year !

The Attic warbler pours her throat,  
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,  
The untaught harmony of Spring :

5

While, whisp'ring pleasure as they fly,  
Cool zephyrs through the clear blue sky  
Their gather'd fragrance fling.

10

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch  
A broader, browner shade,  
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech  
O'er-canopies the glade ;  
Beside some water's rushy brink  
With me the Muse shall sit, and think

15

POETICAL WORKS OF THOMAS GRAY.

(At ease reclined in rustic state)

How vain the ardour of the crowd,  
How low, how little are the proud,  
How indigent the great !

20

Still is the toiling hand of Care;

The panting herds repose :

Yet hark, how through the peopled air  
The busy murmur glows !

The insect youth are on the wing,

25

Eager to taste the honied spring,

And float amid the liquid noon :

Some lightly o'er the current skim,

Some show their gaily-gilded trim

Quick-glancing to the sun.

30

To Contemplation's sober eye

Such is the race of man :

And they that creep, and they that fly,

Shall end where they began.

Alike, the busy and the gay

35

But flutter through life's little day,

In Fortune's varying colours drest :

Brush'd by the hand of rough Mischance,

Or chill'd by Age, their airy dance

They leave, in dust to rest.

40

Methinks I hear, in accents low,

The sportive kind reply :

Poor moralist ! and what art thou ?

A solitary fly !

Thy joys no glitt'ring female meets,

45

No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,

No painted plumage to display :

On hasty wings thy youth is flown ;

Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone—

We frolic while 'tis May.

50

## II.

## HYMN TO ADVERSITY.

*Zῆνα . . .*

*τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὀδώ-*

*παντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος*

*θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.—Æsch. AGAM. 173-177.*

DAUGHTER of Jove, relentless Power,

Thou tamer of the human breast,

Whose iron scourge and torturing hour

The bad affright, afflict the best !

Bound in thy adamantine chain

The proud are taught to taste of pain,

And purple tyrants vainly groan

With pangs unselt before, unpitied and alone.

8

When first thy sire to send on earth

Virtue, his darling child, designed,

To thee he gave the heav'nly birth,

And bade to form her infant mind.

Stern, rugged nurse ! thy rigid lore

With patience many a year she bore :

What sorrow was thou bad'st her know

And from her own she learn'd to melt at others' woe. 16

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly

Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,

Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,

And leave us leisure to be good.

Light they disperse ; and with them go

The summer friend, the flatt'ring foe ;

By vain Prosperity receiv'd,

To her they vow their truth, and are again believ'd. 24

Wisdom in sable garb array'd,  
 Immers'd in rapt'rous thought profound,  
 And Melancholy, silent maid,  
 With leaden eye that loves the ground,  
 Still on thy solemn steps attend :  
 Warm Charity, the general friend,  
 With Justice, to herself severe,  
 And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.      32

Oh ! gently on thy suppliant's head,  
 Dread goddess, lay thy chast'ning hand !  
 Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,  
 Nor circled with the vengeful band  
 (As by the impious thou art seen)  
 With thund'ring voice, and threat'ning mien,  
 With screaming Horror's funeral cry  
 Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly Poverty.      40

Thy form benign, oh goddess, wear,  
 Thy milder influence impart,  
 Thy philosophic train be there  
 To soften, not to wound my heart.  
 The generous spark extinct revive,  
 Teach me to love and to forgive,  
 Exact my own defects to scan,  
 What others are to feel, and know myself a man.      48

## III.

ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF  
ETON COLLEGE.

*"Ανθρωπος ἵκανη πρόφασις εἰς τὸ δυστυχεῖν.*

*Menander.*

YE distant spires, ye antique towers,  
 That crown the wat'ry glade,  
 Where grateful Science still adores  
 Her Henry's holy shade ;  
 And ye that from the stately brou<sup>5</sup>  
 Of Windsor heights th' expanse below  
 Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,  
 Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among  
 Wanders the hoary Thames along  
 His silver-winding way. 10

Ah, happy hills ! ah, pleasing shade !  
 Ah, fields belov'd in vain  
 Where once my careless childhood strayed,  
 A stranger yet to pain !  
 I feel the gales that from ye blow 15  
 A momentary bliss bestow,  
 As waving fresh their gladsome wing,  
 My weary soul they seem to sooth,  
 And, redolent of joy and youth,  
 To breathe a second spring. 20

Say, father Thames, for thou hast seen  
 Full many a sprightly race  
 Disporting on thy margent green,  
 The paths of pleasure trace ;

Who foremost now delight to cleave  
With pliant arm thy glassy wave ?

The captive linnet which enthral ?  
What idle progeny succeed  
To chase the rolling circle's speed,  
Or urge the flying ball ?

While some on earnest business bent

Their murmur'ring labours ply  
'Gainst graver hours that bring constraint  
To sweeten liberty :

Some bold adventurers disdain  
The limits of their little reign,

And unknown regions dare descry :  
Still as they run they look behind,  
They hear a voice in every wind

And snatch a fearful joy.

Gay hope is theirs, by fancy fed,

Less pleasing when possest :  
The tear forgot as soon as shed,

The sunshine of the breast :

Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,  
Wild wit, invention ever new,

And lively cheer, of vigour born :  
The thoughtless day, the easy night,  
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,

That fly th' approach of morn.

Alas ! regardless of their doom

The little victims play ;

No sense have they of ills to come,  
Nor care beyond to-day :

Yet see how all around 'em wait

The ministers of human fate,

And black Misfortune's baleful train !

Ah, show them where in ambush stand  
To seize their prey, the murth'rous band,

Ah, tell them they are men !

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

60

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| These shall the fury Passions tear,          |    |
| The vultures of the mind,                    |    |
| Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,               |    |
| And Shame that skulks behind ;               |    |
| Or pining Love shall waste their youth,      | 65 |
| Or Jealousy with rankling tooth              |    |
| That inly gnaws the secret heart :           |    |
| And Envy wan, and faded Care,                |    |
| Grim-visag'd, comfortless Despair,           |    |
| And Sorrow's piercing dart.,                 | 70 |
| Ambition this shall tempt to rise,           |    |
| Then whirl the wretch from high,             |    |
| To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,                 |    |
| And grinning Infamy.                         |    |
| The stings of Falsehood those shall try,     | 75 |
| And hard Unkindness' alter'd eye,            |    |
| That mocks the tear it forced to flow ;      |    |
| And keen Remorse with blood defiled,         |    |
| And moody Madness laughing wild              |    |
| Amid severest woe.                           | 80 |
| Lo ! in the vale of years beneath            |    |
| A grisly troop are seen,                     |    |
| The painful family of Death,                 |    |
| More hideous than their queen :              |    |
| This racks the joints, this fires the veins, | 85 |
| That every labouring sinew strains,          |    |
| Those in the deeper vitals rage : .          |    |
| Lo ! Poverty, to fill the band,              |    |
| That numbs the soul with icy hand,           |    |
| And slow-consuming Age.                      | 90 |
| To each his sufferings : all are men         |    |
| Condemn'd alike to groan :                   |    |
| The tender for another's pain                |    |
| Th' unfeeling for his own.                   |    |
| Yet, ah ! why should they know their fate,   | 95 |
| Since sorrow never comes too late            |    |

And happiness too swiftly flies ?  
 Thought would destroy their Paradise :  
 No more :—where ignorance is bliss  
 'Tis folly to be wise.

100

1742.

## IV.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE  
 CAT.

'TWAS on a lofty vase's side  
 Where China's gayest art had dyed  
 The azure flowers that blow ;  
 Demurest of the tabby kind,  
 The pensive Selima, reclined,  
 Gazed on the lake below.

6

Her conscious tail her joy declar'd :  
 The fair round face, the snowy beard,  
 The velvet of her paws,  
 Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,  
 Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes  
 She saw ; and purr'd applause.

12

Still had she gazed ; but 'midst the tide  
 Two angel forms were seen to glide,  
 The Genii of the stream.  
 Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue  
 Through richest purple to the view  
 Betray'd a golden gleam.

18

ODE ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT. 9

The hapless nymph with wonder saw :  
A whisker first, and then a claw,  
With many an ardent wish,  
She stretched, in vain, to reach the prize.  
What female heart can gold despise ?  
What cat's averse to fish ?

24

Presumptuous maid ! with looks intent  
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,  
Nor knew the gulf between.  
(Malignant Fate sat by, and smiled,)  
The slipp'ry verge her feet beguiled,  
She tumbled headlong in.

30

Eight times emerging from the flood,  
She mew'd to every wat'ry god,  
Some speedy aid to send.  
No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirr'd,  
Nor cruel Tom, nor Susan heard.  
A fav'rite has no friend !

36

From hence, ye beauties, undeceived  
Know one false step is ne'er retrieved,  
And be with caution bold.  
Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes  
And heedless hearts is lawful prize,  
Nor all that glisters, gold.

42

1747.

## V.

## ELEGY

## WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
 The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,  
 The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,  
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me. 5  
 Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,  
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
 Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,  
 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds :  
 Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,  
 The moping owl does to the moon complain  
 Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bower,  
 Molest her ancient solitary reign. 10  
 Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,  
 Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,  
 Each in his narrow cell for ever laid, 15  
 The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.  
 The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,  
 The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,  
 The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,  
 No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed. 20  
 For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care ;  
 No children run to lisp their sire's return,  
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.  
 Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield, 25  
 Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke ;  
 How jocund did they drive their team afield !  
 How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke !

- Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ; 30  
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short and simple annals of the poor.  
The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Await alike th' inevitable hour : 35  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.  
Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,  
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,  
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,  
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise. 40  
Can storied urn, or animated bust,  
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?  
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,  
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death ?  
Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid 45  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;  
Hands that the rod of empire might have sway'd,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.  
But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of Time did ne'er unroll ; 50  
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul.  
Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark unfathom'd caves of Ocean bear ;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, 55  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.  
Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast  
The little tyrant of his fields withstood ;  
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,  
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood. 60  
Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,  
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,  
And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

- Their lot forbade; nor circumscribed alone 65  
 Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;  
 Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,  
 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,  
 The struggling pangs of conscious Truth to hide,  
 To quench the blushes of ingenuous Shame, 70  
 Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride  
 With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.  
 Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,  
 Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;  
 Along the cool sequester'd vale of life 75  
 They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.  
 Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect.  
 Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
 With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,  
 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh: 80  
 Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered Muse,  
 The place of fame and elegy supply:  
 And many a holy text around she strews,  
 That teach the rustic moralist to die.  
 For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey, 85  
 This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,  
 Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
 Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?  
 On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
 Some pious drops the closing eye requires; 90  
 Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,  
 Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.  
 For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonoured dead,  
 Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;  
 If chance, by lonely Contemplation led, 95  
 Some kindred spirit shall enquire thy fate,  
 Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,  
 'Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn  
 Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,  
 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn: 100

There, at the foot of yonder nodding beech,

That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,  
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,

And pore upon the brook that babbles by.,

Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn, 105

Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove;  
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,

Or crazed with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.  
One morn I miss'd him on the 'custom'd hill,

Along the heath, and near his fav'rite tree; 110  
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,

Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;  
The next, with dirges due in sad array

Slow through the churchway path we saw him borne:  
Approach and read (for thou cans't read) the lay 115

Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.'

### THE EPITAPH.

HERE rests his head upon the lap of Earth,

A youth to fortune and to fame unknown,  
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,

And Melancholy marked him for her own. 120 .

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,

Heav'n did a recompense as largely send;

He gave to Mis'ry all he had—a tear,

He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd)—a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose, 125

Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,  
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)

The bosom of his Father and his God.

## VI.

## THE PROGRESS OF POESY.

## A PINDARIC ODE.

*φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν· ἐς δὲ τὸ πάν έρμηνέων  
χατίζει.*

*Pindar, OLYM. ii. 153.*

## I. I.

AWAKE, Æolian lyre, awake,  
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings:  
From Helicon's harmonious springs

A thousand rills their mazy progress take :  
The laughing flowers, that round them blow,      5  
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.  
Now the rich stream of music winds along,  
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong ;  
Thro' verdant vales and Ceres' golden reign :  
Now rolling down the steep amain,      10  
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour :  
The rocks and nodding groves rebeelow to the roar.

## I. II.

Oh ! sovereign of the willing soul,  
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,  
Enchanting shell ! the sullen Cares      15

And frantic Passions hear thy soft control.  
On Thracia's hills the lord of war  
Has curb'd the fury of his car,  
And dropt his thirsty lance at thy command.  
Perching on the sceptred hand      20

Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feathered king,  
With ruffled plumes and flagging wing :  
Quench'd in dark clouds of slumber lie  
The terror of his beak, and lightnings of his eye.

## I. III.

Thee the voice, the dance obey, 25  
Temper'd to thy warbled lay ;  
O'er Idalia's velvet green  
The rosy-crowned Loves are seen  
On Cytherea's day  
With antic Sport, and blue-eyed Pleasures, 30  
Frisking light in frolic measures ;  
Now pursuing, now retreating,  
Now in circling troops they meet ;  
To brisk notes in cadence beating  
Glance their many-twinkling feet. 35  
Slow melting strains their queen's approach declare :  
Where'er she turns, the Graces homage pay :  
With arms sublime, that float upon the air,  
In gliding state she wins her easy way :  
O'er her warm cheek and rising bosom move 40  
The bloom of young Desire and purple light of Love.

## II. I.

Man's feeble race what ills await !  
Labour, and Penury, the racks of Pain,  
Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,  
And Death, sad refuge from the storms of Fate ! 45  
The fond complaint my song disprove  
And justify the laws of Jove.  
Say, has he giv'n in vain the heavenly Muse ?  
Night and all her sickly dews,  
Her spectres wan, and birds of boding cry, 50  
He gives to range the dreary sky ;  
Till down the eastern cliff's afar  
Hyperion's march they spy, and glitt'ring shafts of war.

## II. II.

In climes beyond the solar road,  
 Where shaggy forms o'er icebuilt mountains roam, 55  
 The Muse has broke the twilight gloom  
 To cheer the shivering native's dull abode.  
 And oft, beneath the odorous shade  
 Of Chili's boundless forests laid,  
 She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat, 60  
 In loose numbers wildly sweet,  
 Their feather-cinctured chiefs, and dusky loves.  
 Her track, where'er the goddess roves,  
 Glory pursue and gen'rous Shame,  
 Th' unconquerable mind, and Freedom's holy flame. 65

## II. III.

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,  
 Isles, that crown the Ægean deep,  
 Fields that cool Ilissus laves  
 Or where Maeander's amber waves  
 In lingering lab'rints creep, 70  
 How do your tuneful echoes languish,  
 Mute, but to the voice of anguish !  
 Where each old poetic mountain  
 Inspiration breath'd around ;  
 Ev'ry shade and hallow'd fountain 75  
 Murmur'd deep a solemn sound ;  
 Till the sad Nine in Greece's evil hour,  
 Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.  
 Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,  
 And coward Vice, that revels in her chains. 80  
 When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,  
 They sought, oh Albion ! next thy sea-encircled  
 coast.

## III. I.

Far from the sun and summer-gale,  
 In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid,

- What time, where lucid Avon stray'd, 85  
 To him the mighty mother did unveil  
 Her awful face : the dauntless child  
 Stretched forth his little arms, and smiled.  
 'This pencil take (she said) whose colours clear  
 Richly paint the vernal year : 90  
 Thine too these golden keys, immortal boy !  
 This can unlock the gates of joy ;  
 Of horror that, and thrilling fears,  
 Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears.'

## III. II.

- Nor second he, that rode sublime 95  
 Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,  
 The secrets of th' abyss to spy.  
 He pass'd the flaming bounds of place and time :  
 The living throne, the sapphire-blaze,  
 Where angels tremble while they gaze, 100  
 He saw ; but, blasted with excess of light,  
 Closed his eyes in endless night.  
 Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous ear  
 Wide o'er the fields of Glory bear  
 Two coursers of ethereal race 105  
 With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.

## III. III.

- Hark, his hands the lyre explore !  
 Bright-eyed Fancy, hovering o'er,  
 Scatters from her pictured urn  
 Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn. 110  
 But ah ! 'tis heard no more—  
 Oh ! Lyre divine, what daring spirit  
 Wakes thee now ? Tho' he inherit  
 Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,  
 That the Theban eagle bear 115  
 Sailing with supreme dominion  
 Thro' the azure deep of air :

Yet oft before his infant eyes would run  
 Such forms as glitter in the Muse's ray,  
 With orient hues, unborrow'd of the sun.

120

Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way  
 Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,  
 Beneath the Good how far ! but far above the Great.

1765.

## VII.

## THE BARD.

## A PINDARIC ODE.

## I. I.

'RUIN seize thee, ruthless King !  
 Confusion on thy banners wait ;  
 Tho' fann'd by Conquest's crimson wing,  
 They mock the air with idle state.

Helm nor hauberk's twisted mail  
 Nor e'en thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail  
 To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,  
 From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears ! '

Such were the sounds that o'er the crested pride  
 Of the first Edward scatter'd wild dismay,  
 As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side  
 He wound with toilsome march his long array.  
 Stout Glo'ster stood aghast in speechless trance :  
 'To arms ! ' cried Mortimer, and couch'd his quiv'ring lance.

5

10

## I. II.

On a rock whose haughty brow  
 Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,  
 Robed in the sable garb of woe,  
 With haggard eyes the Poet stood ;

15

(Loose his beard, and hoary hair  
Stream'd like a meteor to the troubled air) 20  
And with a master's hand, and prophet's fire,  
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.  
'Hark how each giant-oak and desert-cave  
Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath !  
O'er thee, oh King ! their hundred arms they wave, 25  
Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe ;  
Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,  
To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.

## I. III.

'Cold is Cadwallo's tongue  
That hush'd the stormy main ; 30  
Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed ;  
Mountains, ye mourn in vain  
Modred, whose magic song  
Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topt head.  
On dreary Arvon's shore they lie, 35  
Smear'd with gore, and ghastly pale :  
Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail ;  
The famish'd eagle screams, and passes by.  
Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,  
Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes, 40  
Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,  
Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—  
No more I weep. They do not sleep.  
On yonder cliffs, a grisly band,  
I see them sit, they linger yet, 45  
Avengers of their native land.  
With me in dreadful harmony they join  
And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.

## II. I.

'Weave the warp, and weave the woof,  
The winding-sheet of Edward's race. 50  
Give ample room and verge enough  
The characters of Hell to trace.

Mark the year, and mark the night,  
 When Severn shall re-echo with affright  
 The shrieks of death, thro' Berkley's roofs that ring, 55  
 Shrieks of an agonising king !  
 She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,  
     That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,  
 From thee be born who o'er thy country hangs  
     The scourge of Heav'n. What terrors round him 60  
     wait !  
 Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,  
 And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

## II. II.

' Mighty victor, mighty lord,  
     Low on his funeral couch he lies !  
 No pitying heart, no eye, afford 65  
     A tear to grace his obsequies.  
 Is the sable warrior fled ?  
 Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.  
 The swarm, that in thy noontide beam were born ?  
 Gone to salute the rising Morn. 70  
 Fair laughs the Morn, and soft the Zephyr blows,  
     While proudly riding o'er the azure realm,  
 In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;  
     Youth on the prow and Pleasure at the helm ;  
 Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway, 75  
 That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his ev'ning prey.

## II. III.

' Fill high the sparkling bowl,  
     The rich repast prepare,  
 Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast :  
     Close by the regal chair 80  
 Fell Thirst and Famine scowl  
 A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.  
 Heard ye the din of battle bray,  
     Lance to lance and horse to horse ?  
 Long years of havoc urge their destined course, 85  
 And thro' the kindred squadrons mow their way.

- Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,  
 With many a foul and midnight murder fed,  
 Revere his consort's faith, his father's fame,  
 And spare the meek usurper's holy head. 90  
 Above, below, the rose of snow,  
 Twined with her blushing foe, we spread :  
 The bristled Boar in infant-gore  
 Wallows beneath the thorny shade.  
 Now, brothers, bending o'er th' accursed loom, 95  
 Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

## III. I.

- ' Edward, lo ! to sudden fate  
 (Weave we the woof. The thread is spun.)  
 Half of thy heart we consecrate.  
 (The web is wove. The work is done.) 100  
 Stay, oh stay ! nor thus forlorn  
 Leave me unbless'd, unpitied, here to mourn :  
 In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,  
 They melt, they vanish from my eyes.  
 But oh ! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height 105  
 Descending slow their glittering skirts unroll.  
 Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,  
 Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul !  
 No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail.  
 All hail, ye genuine kings, Britannia's issue, hail ! 110

## III. II.

- ' Girt with many a baron bold  
 Sublime their starry fronts they rear ;  
 And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old,  
 In bearded majesty, appear.  
 In the midst a form divine ! 115  
 Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line ;  
 Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,  
 Attemper'd sweet to virgin-grace.

What strings symphonious tremble in the air,  
 What strains of vocal transport round her play ! 120  
 Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear ;  
 They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.  
 Bright Rapture calls, and, soaring as she sings,  
 Waves in the eye of heav'n her many-colour'd wings.

## III. III.

'The verse adorn again : 125  
 Fierce War, and faithful Love,  
 And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction drest.  
 In buskin'd measures move .  
 Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,  
 With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast. 130  
 A voice, as of the cherub-choir,  
 Gales from blooming Eden bear ;  
 And distant warblings lessen on my ear,  
 That lost in long futurity expire.  
 Fond impious man, think'st thou yon sanguine cloud, 135  
 Raised by thy breath, has quench'd the orb of day ?  
 To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,  
 And warms the nations with redoubled ray.  
 Enough for me : with joy I see  
 The different doom our Fates assign. 140  
 Be thine Despair, and sceptred Care,  
 To triumph, and to die, are mine.'  
 He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height  
 Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless night.

## VIII.

## THE FATAL SISTERS.

FROM THE NORSE.

Now the storm begins to lower,  
 (Haste, the loom of Hell prepare).  
 Iron sleet of arrowy shower  
 Hurtles in the darken'd air.

Glittering lances are the loom,                       5  
 Where the dusky warp we strain,  
 Weaving many a soldier's doom,  
 Orkney's woe, and Randver's bane.

See the grisly texture grow !  
 ('Tis of human entrails made,)                       10  
 And the weights that play below,  
 Each a gasping warrior's head.

Shafts for shuttles, dipt in gore,  
 Shoot the trembling cords along,  
 Sword, that once a monarch bore,                       15  
 Keep the tissue close and strong.

Mista, black terrific maid,  
 Sangrida, and Hilda, see !  
 Join the wayward work to aid ;  
 'Tis the woof of victory.                               20

Ere the ruddy sun be set,  
 Pikes must shiver, javelins sing,  
 Blade with clattering buckler meet,  
 Hauberk crash, and helmet ring.

(Weave the crimson web of war)

25

Let us go, and let us fly,  
 Where our friends the conflict share,  
 Where they triumph, where they die.

As the paths of fate we tread,

30

Wading thro' th' ensanguined field,  
 Gondula, and Geira, spread  
 O'er the youthful king your shield.

We the reins to slaughter give,

35

Ours to kill, and ours to spare,  
 Spite of danger he shall live.

(Weave the crimson web of war).

They whom once the desert-beach

40

Pent within its bleak domain,  
 Soon their ample sway shall stretch  
 O'er the plenty of the plain.

Low the dauntless earl is laid,

Gored with many a gaping wound :  
 Fate demands a nobler head ;  
 Soon a king shall bite the ground.

Long his loss shall Eirin weep,

45

Ne'er again his likeness see ;  
 Long her strains in sorrow steep,  
 Strains of immortality !

Horror covers all the heath,

Clouds of carnage blot the sun :  
 Sisters, weave the web of death ;  
 Sisters, cease ; the work is done.

Hail the task, and hail the hands !

Songs of joy and triumph sing !  
 Joy to the victorious bands ;  
 Triumph to the younger king.

50

55

Mortal, thou that hear'st the tale,  
 Learn the tenour of our song ;  
 Scotland, thro' each winding vale,  
 Far and wide the notes prolong.

60

Sisters, hence with spurs of speed :  
 Each her thundering falchion wield ;  
 Each bestride her sable steed ;  
 Hurry, hurry to the field.

1767.

## IX.

## THE DESCENT OF ODIN.

FROM THE NORSE.

Uprose the King of Men with speed,  
 And saddled straight his coal-black steed :  
 Down the yawning steep he rode,  
 That leads to Hela's drear abode.

Him the dog of Darkness spied ;                       5  
 His shaggy throat he open'd wide,  
 While from his jaws, with carnage fill'd,  
 Foam and human gore distill'd :  
 Hoarse he bays, with hideous din,  
 Eyes that glow, and fangs that grin ;                   10  
 And long pursues, with fruitless yell,  
 The Father of the powerful spell.

Onward still his way he takes,  
 (The groaning earth beneath him shakes,)              15  
 Till full before his fearless eyes  
 The portals nine of Hell arise.

Right against the eastern gate,  
 By the moss-grown pile he sate,  
 Where long of yore to sleep was laid  
 The dust of the prophetic Maid.                       20  
 Facing to the Northern clime,  
 Thrice he traced the Runic rhyme ;

Thrice pronounced in accents dread  
 The thrilling verse that wakes the dead ;  
 Till from out the hollow ground  
 Slowly breathed a sullen sound.

25

*Prophetess.* What call unknown, what charms  
 presume

To break the quiet of the tomb ?  
 Who thus afflicts my troubled sprite,  
 And drags me from the realms of night ?  
 Long on these mould'ring bones have beat  
 The winter's snow, the summer's heat,  
 The drenching dews, and driving rain.  
 Let me, let me sleep again.

30

Who is he, with voice unblest,  
 That calls me from the bed of rest ?

35

*Odin.* A traveller, to thee unknown,  
 Is he that calls, a warrior's son.  
 Thou the deeds of light shalt know;  
 Tell me what is done below,  
 For whom yon glitt'ring board is spread,  
 Drest for whom yon golden bed.

40

*Prophetess.* Mantling in the goblet see  
 The pure beverage of the bee :  
 O'er it hangs the shield of gold ;  
 'Tis the drink of Balder bold :  
 Balder's head to death is giv'n.  
 Pain can reach the Sons of Heav'n !  
 Unwilling I my lips unclose :  
 Leave me, leave me to repose.

45

50

*Odin.* Once again my call obey,  
 Prophetess, arise, and say,  
 What dangers Odin's child await,  
 Who the author of his fate.

*Prophetess.* In Hoder's hand the Hero's doom ; 55  
 His brother sends him to the tomb.  
 Now my weary lips I close :  
 Leave me, leave me to repose.

*Odin.* Prophetess, my spell obey,  
Once again arise, and say, 60  
Who th' avenger of his guilt,  
By whom shall Hoder's blood be spilt.

*Prophetess.* In the caverns of the west,  
By Odin's fierce embrace comprest,  
A wondrous Boy shall Rinda bear, 65  
Who ne'er shall comb his raven-hair,  
Nor wash his visage in the stream,  
Nor see the sun's departing beam,  
Till he on Hoder's corse shall smile  
Flaming on the funeral pile. 70  
Now my weary lips I close :  
Leave me, leave me to repose.

*Odin.* Yet awhile my call obey ;  
Prophetess, awake, and say  
What virgins these, in speechless woe, 75  
That bend to earth their solemn brow,  
That their flaxen tresses tear,  
And snowy veils, that float in air.  
Tell me whence their sorrows rose,  
Then I leave thee to repose. 80

*Prophetess.* Ha ! no traveller art thou,  
King of Men, I know thee now ;  
Mightiest of a mighty line—

*Odin.* No boding maid of skill divine  
Art thou, nor prophetess of good, 85  
But mother of the giant-brood !

*Prophetess.* Hie thee hence and boast at home,  
That never shall inquirer come  
To break my iron-sleep again ;  
Till Lok has burst his tenfold chain ; 90  
Never, till substantial Night  
Has reassum'd her ancient right ;  
Till, wrapp'd in flames, in ruin hurl'd,  
Sinks the fabric of the world.

## X.

## THE DEATH OF HOEL.

FROM THE WELSH.

HAD I but the torrent's might,  
 With headlong rage and wild affright  
 Upon Deïra's squadrons hurl'd,  
 To rush, and sweep them from the world !

Too, too secure in youthful pride,  
 By them, my friend, my Hoel, died,  
 Great Cian's son : of Madoc old  
 He ask'd no heaps of hoarded gold ;  
 Alone in Nature's wealth array'd,  
 He ask'd and had the lovely Maid.

5

10

To Cattraeth's vale in glitt'ring row  
 Thrice two hundred warriors go :

Every warrior's manly neck  
 Chains of regal honour deck,  
 Wreath'd in many a golden link :  
 From the golden cup they drink  
 Nectar, that the bees produce,  
 Or the grape's ecstatic juice.

15

Flush'd with mirth and hope they burn ;  
 But none from Cattraeth's vale return,  
 Save Aëron brave, and Conan strong,  
 (Bursting through the bloody throng)  
 And I, the meanest of them all,  
 That live to weep and sing their fall.

20

## XI.

## THE TRIUMPHS OF OWEN.

## A FRAGMENT.

FROM THE WELSH.

OWEN's praise demands my song,  
 Owen swift and Owen strong ;  
 Fairest flower of Roderic's stem,  
 Gwyneth's shield and Britain's gem.  
 He nor heaps his brooded stores,  
 Nor on all profusely pours ;  
 Lord of every regal art,  
 Liberal hand, and open heart.

5

Big with hosts of mighty name,  
 Squadrons three against him came ;  
 This the force of Eirin hiding,  
 Side by side as proudly riding,  
 On her shadow long and gay  
 Lochlin ploughs the wat'ry way ;  
 There the Norman sails afar  
 Catch the winds, and join the war ;  
 Black and huge along they sweep,  
 Burthens of the angry deep.

10

15

Dauntless on his native sands  
 The Dragon-Son of Mona stands ;  
 In glitt'ring arms and glory drest,  
 High he rears his ruby crest.  
 There the thund'ring strokes begin,  
 There the press, and there the din ;  
 Talymalfra's rocky shore  
 Echoing to the battle's roar.

20

25

Check'd by the torrent-tide of blood,  
 Backward Meinai rolls his flood ;  
 While, heap'd his master's feet around,  
 Prostrate warriors gnaw the ground.      30  
 Where his glowing eyeballs turn,  
 Thousand banners round him burn.  
 Where he points his púrple spear,  
 Hasty, hasty Rout is there,  
 Marking with indignant eye      35  
 Fear to stop, and shame to fly.  
 There Confusion, Terror's child,  
 Conflict fierce, and Ruin wild,  
 Agony, that pants for breath,  
 Despair and honourable Death.      40

\*     \*     \*

1767—1768.

## XII.

### ODE FOR MUSIC.

#### IRREGULAR.

##### I.

‘Hence, avaunt, (’tis holy ground)  
 Comus and his midnight-crew,  
 And Ignorance with looks profound,  
 And dreaming Sloth of pallid hue,  
 Mad Sedition’s cry profane,      5  
 Servitude that hugs her chain,  
 Nor in these consecrated bowers  
 Let paint’d Flatt’ry hide her serpent-train in flowers.  
 Nor Envy base, nor creeping Gain  
 Dare the Muse’s walk to stain,      10  
 While bright-eyed Science watches round :  
 Hence, away, ’tis holy ground !’

## II.

- From yonder realms of empyrean day  
 Bursts on my ear th' indignant lay :  
 There sit the sainted Sage, the Bard divine,  
 The few whom Genius gave to shine  
 Thro' every unborn age, and undiscover'd clime.  
 Rapt in celestial transport they,  
 Yet hither oft a glance from high  
 They send of tender sympathy  
 To bless the place, where on their opening soul  
 First the genuine ardour stole.  
 'Twas Milton struck the deep-toned shell,  
 And, as the choral warblings round him swell,  
 Meek Newton's self bends from his state sublime,  
 And nods his hoary head, and listens to the rhyme.

## III.

- 'Ye brown o'er-arching groves,  
 That Contemplation loves,  
 Where willowy Camus lingers with delight !  
 Oft at the blush of dawn  
 I trod your level lawn,  
 Oft woo'd the gleam of Cynthia silver-bright  
 In cloisters dim, far from the haunts of Folly,  
 With Freedom by my side, and soft-eyed Melancholy.'

## IV.

- But hark ! the portals sound, and pacing forth  
 With solemn steps and slow,  
 High potentates, and dames of royal birth,  
 And mitred fathers in long order go :  
 Great Edward, with the lilies on his brow  
 From haughty Gallia torn,  
 And sad Chatillon, on her bridal morn,  
 That wept her bleeding Love, and princely Clare,  
 And Anjou's heroine, and the paler Rose,  
 The rival of her crown and of her woes,

And either Henry there,  
The murdered Saint and the majestic Lord,  
That broke the bonds of Rome.

(Their tears, their little triumphs o'er,  
Their human passions now no more,  
Save Charity, that glows beyond the tomb.)

All that on Granta's fruitful plain  
Rich streams of regal bounty pour'd,  
And bade these awful fanes and turrets rise,  
To hail their Fitzroy's festal morning come;  
And thus they speak in soft accord  
The liquid language of the skies :

## V.

'What is grandeur, what is power?  
Heavier toil, superior pain.  
What the bright reward we gain ?  
The grateful memory of the good.  
Sweet is the breath of vernal shower,  
The bee's collected treasures sweet,  
Sweet Music's melting fall, but sweeter yet  
The still small voice of Gratitude.'

## VI.

Foremost and leaning from her golden cloud  
The venerable Margaret see !  
'Welcome, my noble son,' (she cries aloud)  
'To this, thy kindred train, and me :  
Pleased in thy lineaments we trace  
A Tudor's fire, a Beaufort's grace.  
Thy liberal heart, thy judging eye,  
The flower unheeded shall descry,  
And bid it round heav'n's altar shed  
The fragrance of its blushing head :  
Shall raise from earth the latent gem  
To glitter on the diadem.

45

55

60

70

75

## VII.

Lo ! Granta waits to lead her blooming band,  
 Not obvious, not obtrusive, she  
 No vulgar praise, no venal incense flings ;  
 Nor dares with courtly tongue refined      80  
 Profane thy inborn royalty of mind :  
 She reveres herself and thee.  
 With modest pride to grace thy youthful brow,  
 The laureate wreath, that Cecil wore, she brings  
 And to thy just, thy gentle hand,      85  
 Submits the fasces of her sway,  
 While spirits blest above and men below  
 Join with glad voice the loud symphonious lay.

## VIII.

'Thro' the wild waves as they roar,  
 With watchful eye and dauntless mien,      90  
 Thy steady course of honour keep,  
 Nor fear the rocks nor seek the shore :  
 The star of Brunswick smiles serene ;  
 And gilds the horrors of the deep.'

1769.



## **APPENDIX.**



## I.

SONNET ON THE DEATH OF MR. RICHARD  
WEST.

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,  
And redd'ning Phœbus lifts his golden fire :  
The birds in vain their amorous descant join ;  
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire :  
These ears, alas ! for other notes repine,  
A different object do these eyes require :  
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine ;  
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.  
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,  
And newborn pleasure brings to happier men :  
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear.  
To warm their little loves the birds complain :  
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear ;  
And weep the more, because I weep in vain.

1742.

## II

## ON THE ALLIANCE OF EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT.

## A FRAGMENT.

As sickly plants betray a niggard earth,  
 Whose barren bosom starves her generous birth,  
 Nor genial warmth, nor genial juice retains,  
 Their roots to feed, and fill their verdant veins :  
 And as in climes where winter holds his reign, 5  
 The soil, though fertile, will not teem in vain,  
 Forbids her gems to swell, her shades to rise,  
 Nor trusts her blossoms to the churlish skies :  
 So draw mankind in vain the vital airs,  
 Unform'd, unfriended, by those kindly cares, 10  
 That health and vigour to the soul impart,  
 Spread the young thought, and warm the opening heart.  
 { So fond instruction on the growing powers  
 { Of nature idly lavishes her stores,  
 { If equal justice with unclouded face 15  
 Smile not indulgent on the rising race,  
 And scatter with a free, though frugal hand  
 Light golden showers of plenty o'er the land :  
 But tyranny has fix'd her empire there,  
 To check their tender hopes with chilling fear, 20  
 And blast the blooming promise of the year.  
 This spacious animated scene survey,  
 From where the rolling orb, that gives the day,  
 His sable sons with nearer course surrounds  
 To either pole, and life's remotest bounds, 25

How rude soe'er th' exterior form we find,  
 Howe'er opinion tinge the varied mind,  
 Alike to all the kind impartial heav'n  
 The sparks of truth and happiness has giv'n :  
 With sense to feel, with memory to retain, 30  
 They follow pleasure, and they fly from pain ;  
 Their judgment mends the plan their fancy draws,  
 Th' event presages, and explores the cause ;  
 The soft returns of gratitude they know,  
 By fraud elude, by force repel the foe ; 35.  
 While mutual wishes, mutual woes endear  
 The social smile and sympathetic tear.  
 Say then, through ages by what fate confined  
 To different climes seem different souls assign'd.  
 Here measured laws and philosophic ease 40  
 Fix, and improve the polish'd arts of peace ;  
 There industry and gain their vigils keep,  
 Command the winds, and tame th' unwilling deep.  
 Here force and hardy deeds of blood prevail ;  
 There languid pleasure sighs in every gale. 45  
 Oft o'er the trembling nations from afar  
 Has Scythia breath'd the living cloud of war ;  
 And, where the deluge burst, with sweepy sway,  
 Their arms, their kings, their gods were roll'd away.  
 As oft have issued, host impelling host, 50  
 The blue-eyed myriads from the Baltic coast.  
 The prostrate south to the destroyer yields  
 Her boasted titles, and her golden fields :  
 With grim delight the brood of winter view  
 A brighter day, and heav'n's of azure hue ; 55  
 Scent the new fragrance of the breathing rose,  
 And quaff the pendent vintage as it grows.  
 Proud of the yoke, and pliant to the rod,  
 Why yet does Asia dread a monarch's nod,  
 While European freedom still withstands 60  
 Th' encroaching tide that drowns her lessening lands;

- And sees far off, with an indignant groan,  
 Her native plains, and empires once her own ?  
 Can opener skies and suns of fiercer flame  
 O'erpower the fire that animates our frame ; 65  
 As lamps, that shed at eve a cheerful ray,  
 Fade and expire beneath the eye of day ?  
 Need we the influence of the Northern star  
 To string our nerves and steel our hearts to war ?  
 And, where the face of nature laughs around, 70  
 Must sickening virtue fly the tainted ground ?  
 Unmanly thought ! what seasons can control,  
 What fancied zone can circumscribe the soul,  
 Who, conscious of the source from whence she springs,  
 By reason's light, on resolution's wings, 75  
 Spite of her frail companion, dauntless goes  
 O'er Lybia's deserts and through Zembla's snows ?  
 She bids each slumbering energy awake,  
 Another touch, another temper take,  
 Suspends th' inferior laws that rule our clay : 80  
 The stubborn elements confess her sway ;  
 Their little wants, their low desires, refine,  
 And raise the mortal to a height divine.  
 Not but the human fabric from the birth  
 Imbibes a flavour of its parent earth : 85  
 As various tracts enforce a various toil,  
 The manners speak the idiom of their soil.  
 An iron-race the mountain-cliffs maintain,  
 Foes to the gentler genius of the plain :  
 For where unwearyed sinews must be found 90  
 With side-long plough to quell the flinty ground,  
 To turn the torrent's swift-descending flood,  
 To brave the savage rushing from the wood,  
 What wonder, if, to patient valour train'd  
 They guard with spirit what by strength they gain'd ? 95  
 And while their rocky ramparts round they see  
 The rough abode of want and liberty,

(As lawless force from confidence will grow,) Insult the plenty of the vales below?

What wonder, in the sultry climes, that spread 100

Where Nile redundant o'er his summer-bed

From his broad bosom life and verdure flings,

And broods o'er Egypt with his wat'ry wings,

If with adventurous oar and ready sail

The dusky people drive before the gale;

Or on frail floats to neighbouring cities ride,

That rise and glitter o'er the ambient tide?

\* \* \* \*

1748.

### III.

#### A LONG STORY.

In Britain's isle, no matter where,

An ancient pile of building stands:

The Huntingdons and Hattons there

Employ'd the power of fairy hands,

To raise the ceiling's fretted height,

Each panel in achievements clothing,

Rich windows that exclude the light,

And passages that lead to nothing.

Full oft within the spacious walls,

When he had fifty winters o'er him,

My grave Lord-Keeper led the brawls:

The seal and maces danced before him.

His bushy beard and shoe-strings green,

His high-crown'd hat and satin doublet,

Moved the stout heart of England's Queen,

Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it.

What, in the very first beginning,  
 Shame of the versifying tribe !  
 Your history whither are you spinning ?  
 Can you do nothing but describe ?

A house there is (and that's enough)  
 From whence one fatal morning issues  
 A brace of warriors, not in buff,  
 But rustling in their silks and tissues.

The first came *cap-à-pie* from France,  
 Her conquering destiny fulfilling,  
 Whom meaner beauties eye askance,  
 And vainly ape her art of killing.

The other Amazon kind Heaven  
 Had arm'd with spirit, wit, and satire ;  
 But Cobham had the polish given,  
 And tipp'd her arrows with good nature.

To celebrate her eyes, her air—  
 Coarse panegyrics would but tease her ;  
 Melissa is her *nom de guerre* ;  
 Alas ! who would not wish to please her !

With bonnet blue and capuchine,  
 And aprons long, they hid their armour ;  
 And veil'd their weapons, bright and keen,  
 In pity to the country farmer.

Fame, in the shape of Mr. P—t  
 (By this time all the parish know it),  
 Had told that thereabouts there lurk'd  
 A wicked imp they called a Poet. ·

Who prowld the country far and near,  
 Bewitch'd the children of the peasants,  
 Dried up the cows, and lamed the deer,  
 And suck'd the eggs, and kill'd the pheasants.

My Lady heard their joint petition,  
 Swore by her coronet and ermine,  
 She'd issue out her high commission  
 To rid the manor of such vermin.

The heroines undertook the task ;  
 Through lanes unknown, o'er stiles they ventured,  
 Rapp'd at the door, nor stay'd to ask,  
 But bounce into the parlour enter'd.

The trembling family they daunt ;  
 They flirt, they sing, they laugh, they tattle ;  
 Rummage his mother, pinch his aunt,  
 And upstairs in a whirlwind rattle.

Each hole and cupboard they explore,  
 Each creak and cranny of his chamber,  
 Run hurry scurry round the floor,  
 And o'er the bed and tester chamber ;

Into the drawers and china pry,  
 Papers and books, a huge imbroglio !  
 Under a tea-cup he might lie,  
 Or creased like dog's-ears in a folio !

On the first marching of the troops,  
 The Muses, hopeless of his pardon,  
 Convey'd him underneath their hoops  
 To a small closet in the garden.

So rumour says (who will believe ?)  
 But that they left the door ajar,  
 Where safe, and laughing in his sleeve,  
 He heard the distant din of war.

Short was his joy : he little knew  
 The power of magic was no fable ;  
 Out of the window, whisk ! they flew,  
 But left a spell upon the table.

The words too eager to unriddle,  
 The Poet felt a strange disorder ;  
 Transparent birdlime form'd the middle,  
 And chains invisible the border.

So cunning was the apparatus,  
 The powerful pothooks did so move him,  
 That will-he, nill-he, to the great house  
 He went as if the devil drove him.

Yet on his way (no sign of grace,  
 For folks in fear are apt to pray)  
 To Phœbus he preferr'd his case,  
 And begg'd his aid that dreadful day.

The godhead would have back'd his quarrel,  
 But with a blush, on recollection,  
 Own'd that his quiver and his laurel  
 'Gainst four such eyes were no protection.

The court was set, the culprit there ;  
 Forth from their gloomy mansions creeping,  
 The Lady Janes and Joans repair,  
 And from the gallery stand peeping :

Such as in silence of the night  
 Come sweep along some winding entry,  
 (Styack has often seen the sight)  
 Or at the chapel-door stand sentry ;

In peaked hoods and mantles tarnish'd,  
 Sour visages enough to scare ye,  
 High dames of honour once that garnish'd,  
 The drawing-room of fierce Queen Mary !

The peeress comes : the audience stare,  
 And doff their hats with due submission ;  
 She curtsies, as she takes her chair,  
 To all the people of condition.

The Bard with many an artless fib  
 Had in imagination fenced him,  
 Disproved the arguments of Squib,  
 And all that Grooms could urge against him.

But soon his rhetoric forsook him,  
 When he the solemn hall had seen ;  
 A sudden fit of ague shook him ;  
 He stood as mute as poor Maclean.

Yet something he was heard to mutter,  
 How in the park beneath an old tree,  
 (Without design to hurt the butter,  
 Or any malice to the poultry,) )

He once or twice had penn'd a sonnet,  
 Yet hoped that he might save his bacon ;  
 Numbers would give their oaths upon it,  
 He ne'er was for a conjuror taken.

The ghostly prudes, with hagg'd face,  
 Already had condemn'd the sinner :  
 My Lady rose, and with a grace—  
 She smiled, and bid him come to dinner.

‘ Jesu-Maria ! Madam Bridget,  
 Why, what can the Viscountess mean ? ’  
 Cried the square hoods, in woeful fidget ;  
 ‘ The times are alter’d quite and clean !

‘ Decorum’s turn’d to mere civility !  
 Her air and all her manners show it :  
 Commend me to her affability !  
 Speak to a commoner and poet ! ’

[*Here 500 stanzas are lost.*]

And so God save our noble King,  
 And guard us from long-winded lubbers,  
 That to eternity would sing,  
 And keep my lady from her rubbers.

1750-1.

## IV.

## SKETCH OF HIS OWN CHARACTER.

Too poor for a bribe, and too proud to importune ;  
 He had not the method of making a fortune :  
 Could love, and could hate, so was thought something  
 odd :

No very great wit, he believ'd in a God :  
 A post or a pension he did not desire,                   5  
 But left church and state to Charles Townshend and  
 Squire.

1761.

## V.

## THE CANDIDATE :

OR

## THE CAMBRIDGE COURTSHIP.

WHEN sly Jemmy Twitcher had smugg'd up his face  
 With a lick of court white-wash and pious grimace,  
 A wooing he went where three sisters of old  
 In harmless society guttle and scold.  
 'Lord ! Sister,' says Physic to Law, 'I declare,  
 Such a sheep-biting look, such a pick-pocket air !'

Not I for the Indies:—You know I'm no prude,—  
 But his name is a shame,—and his eyes are so lewd !  
 Then he shambles and straddles so oddly—I fear—  
 No—at our time of life 'twould be silly, my dear.'  
 'I don't know,' says Law, 'but methinks for his look,  
 'Tis just like the picture in Rochester's book ;  
 Then his character, Phizzy,—his morals—his life—  
 When she died I can't tell, but he once had a wife.  
 They say he's no Christian, loves drinking and whoring,  
 And all the town rings of his swearing and roaring !  
 His lying and filching, and Newgate-bird tricks ;—  
 Not I—for a coronet, chariot and six.'  
 Divinity heard, between waking and dozing,  
 Her sisters denying, and Jemmy proposing :  
 From table she rose, and with bumper in hand,  
 She strok'd up her belly and strok'd down her band—  
 'What a pother is here about wenching and roaring !  
 Why David lov'd catches and Solomon whoring:  
 Did not Israel filch from th' Egyptians of old  
 Their jewels of silver and jewels of gold ?  
 The prophet of Bethel, we read, told a lie ;  
 He drinks—so did Noah ; he swears—so do I :  
 To reject him for such peccadillos were odd ;  
 Besides, he repents—for he talks about God—

## To JEMMY.

'Never hang down your head, you poor penitent elf,  
 Come buss me, I'll be Mrs. Twitcher myself.'



## VI.

## TOPHET.

## AN EPIGRAM.

Thus Tophet look'd ; so grinn'd the brawling fiend,  
Whilst frighted prelates bow'd, and call'd him friend.  
Our mother-church, with half-averted sight,  
Blush'd as she bless'd her grisly proselyte ;  
Hosannas rung through Hell's tremendous borders,  
And Satan's self had thoughts of taking orders.

# NOTES TO POEMS.

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## I.

[‘Ode on the Spring.’ The original MS. title was *Noon-tide*, and the subsequent alteration was due, suggests Mason, to Gray’s abandonment of a design to write companion odes descriptive of Morning and Evening.]

1. *Lo, where.*] See, where. A.-S. *La*. It has been called an abbreviation of *Look*; Adams, § 417, 2.

— *Rosy-bosom’d.*] This epithet, which Milton (*Comus*, 986) applies to the Hours and Thomson (Spr. 1,009) to the Spring, is said by Wakefield to mean *with bosoms full of roses*. This is possible, as ‘rosy-bosomed,’ meaning ‘bosomed with roses,’ is as legitimate a formation as ‘rosy-crowned,’ meaning ‘crowned (or garlanded) with roses’ (vi. 28). But it seems simpler to look on it as a translation of ῥοδόκολπος (*rhodokolpos*), an epithet applied to Eunomia, one of the Hours, by a Greek lyric poet. See L. and S. Lex. The epithets *rosy-fingered* (*ροδοδάκτυλος*) and *rosy-footed* should be compared.

— *Hours.*] The ancient year being divided into Spring, Summer, and Winter, the *\*Ωραι*, or Hours, were represented as *three* sisters, the daughters of Themis, and were called Eunomia, Diké, and Eiréne. In the ‘Homeric Hymn to Aphrodité’ (ii. 5), the Hours act as the attiring maidens of the goddess. In Hesiod (W. and D. 75), they are beautiful-haired maidens who crown the goddess Athéné with chaplets of vernal flowers. The Lat -or becomes, almost without exception, -eur- in Mod. Fr.: cf. honor, honneur; illorum, leur; mores, meurs; but the intermediate form in O. Fr. is -our-: cf. amor, amour; mori, mourir; vigor, vigoureux. It was at this stage of the Fr. language that our nouns in -our were borrowed.

2. *Venus’.*] In a word ending with *s*, the possessive case is sufficiently indicated by an apostrophe. See Adams, § 141.

— *Fair.*] Applied without any particular force, and almost mechanically, just as ‘alma,’ *benign*, or *fostering*, was the ever-recurring epithet of Venus in Latin poetry.

— *Train.*] See note on *Hours*. To *train*, Lat. *traho*, Fr. *trahir*, trainer, is to *draw*, or *trail*, behind. A *train*, then, is something drawn

behind a person or thing, and is applied indifferently to the folds of a robe, the tail of a bird, and the retinue of a potentate, &c. &c. Cf. II. 43 : 'Thy philosophic train be there.'

3. *Disclose.*] This word, which has no affinity apparently with Lat. *discludo*, to separate, shut off, is formed like *dis-agree*, *dis-satisfy*, &c. the prefix *dis* having a privative force. 'The Hours disclose the flowers which the Winter's rigour had closed.'

— *Long-expecting.*] The flowers are impatient for the advent of spring. It is scarcely necessary to mention the absurd misprint, *long-expected*, which has found its way into some editions.

4. *Wake.*] Cf. Pope's 'Temple of Fame,' i. 2. 'Call forth the greens, and *wake* the rising flowers.'

— *Purple year.*] 'Ipsa gemmis purpurantem pingit annum floribus' (Apuleius). The 'ver purpureum' of Virgil (E. ix. 40) is well-known. What the ancients understood by purple, it is not easy to determine. The epithet seems to have been applied to any bright and dazzlingly beautiful colour, as Virgil uses it of the *white narcissus* (E. v. 38), of the sea when flushed by the wind (G. iv. 373); and Horace talks of *purple siccans* (Od. iv. i. 10), and Albinovanus (ii. 62) of *purple snow*. See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 266, note.

5. *Attic warbler.*] The nightingale, in Lat. poetry always *Philomela* or *Attica avis*. Called *Attic*, because she haunted the groves round Athens, the chief city of Attica; and also with reference to the myth of Philomela and Tereus. The hint for Gray's name for the nightingale was borrowed from a passage in Milton, 'P. R.' iv. 244-247—

See there the olive grove of Academe,  
Plato's retirement, where the *Attic* bird  
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long.

Cf. the famous chorus in the 'Œdipus Colonens' of Sophocles (672).

— *Pours her throat.*] Cf. Pope, 'Is it for thee the linnet *pours his throat?*' (Essay on Man, iii. 33.) Pouring melody from the throat is common enough in poetry. If pouring her throat means anything more, it is that she pours the full flood of song, all the melody within the compass of her throat. The expression has been much admired by the commentators.

6. *Responsive.*] The nightingale takes up and answers at eve the song which the cuckoo has been singing all the day. Others think it means that the cuckoo is the first to announce the approach of spring, and by its *note* calls on the birds to welcome the new-comer. To this call the nightingale responds. But the explanation is far-fetched.

— *Cuckoo.*] Gr. κόκκυξ (kokkux), Lat. cucullus, It. cuculo, Fr. coucou, Ger. Kuckuk, Sp. cuco; an obvious onomatopœia. Cf. Milton's 'Ode to the Nightingale,' 6 : 'The shallow cuckoo's bill.'

7. An example of the construction πρὸς τὸ σημαινόμενον (pros to *semainomenon*). See Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 197, note. The nightingale

pours her flood of melody which, together with the note of the cuckoo, makes the harmony of spring. The literal meaning of harmony, however, must not be pressed. Cf. a passage from Spenser, 'F. Q.' ii. xii. 33, quoted on p. 75 of 'Samson Agon.' Bombay edit.

8. *Whispering.*] Cf. with these three lines Milton, 'P. L.' iv. 157—

Now gentle gales,  
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense  
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole  
Those balmy spoils, &c.

9. *Zephyrs.*] Cf. the picture in Lucretius, v. 936, where Zephyrus is the forerunner of Venus and of spring.

— *Clear.*] This epithet either qualifies *blue* adverbially, or is, like *blue*, an attribute of *sky*. Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 285, 292.

10. *Gathered fragrance.*] The *balmy spoils* which they have *stolen* from the flowers in their passage.

— *Fling.*] Belongs to the group of onomatopœias—flog, flag, flap, fly; Lat. *fligere*, &c.

12. *Broader.*] Than usual. It is equivalent to a superlative. Virgil uses *major* in the same sense, 'G.' i. 416; 'E.' i. 84—

*Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ.*

— *Brownier.*] Darker. Cf. Milton, 'P. L.' iv. 246—

The unpierced shade  
*Imbrown'd* the noontide bowers.

13. *Rude.*] Untrained by art, the ordinary signification of Lat. *rudis*.

— *Moss-grown.*] Overgrown with moss. Cf. IX. 18.

14. *O'er-canopies, &c.*] Imitation of Shaksp. 'Mids. Night's Dr.' act ii. sc. i. 1. 251: 'A bank . . . o'er-canopied with luscious woodbine.' (G.) Cf. 'Comus,' 544; Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 306, note.

— *Glade.*] An opening in a wood; cf. III. 2.

15. Cf. Lucr. v. 13: 'Propter aquæ rivum, sub ramis arboris altae.'

— *Rushy.*] Fringed with rushes, sedge, reeds, &c. It is purposely vague.

16. On this line consult p. xxvii. of the Critical Introduction.

17. *At ease reclined.*] Is nearly equivalent to '*lentus in umbrâ*', Virg. 'E.' i. 4; and see Conington.

— *In rustic state.*] In such pomp and affectation of luxury as lies within the reach of the *rustic* muse. Cf. 'Gazâ lætus agresti,' Virg. 'Æn.' v. 40.

18. Cf. 'Elegy,' 93: 'Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife.'

19. See 'Various Readings.' The *conceit* in the original couplet is obvious.

20. *The great.*] Cf. 'Progress of Poesy,' 123.

21. *Care.*] Not a personification, but an abstract noun—for the care-worn sons of toil.

22. *Panting.*] In the noon-tide heat. Cf. for the sentiment, Virg. 'E.' ii. 8; Pers. iii. 6.

23. *Yet.*] Introduces a contrast between the death-like stillness on the earth and the busy life in the air.

— *Peopled.*] Swarming with the population native to that element. Cf. Beaumont's 'Psyche,' st. 77—

Every tree *empeopled* was with birds of softest throats.

24. *Busy murmur.*] Cf. Milton, 'P. R.' iv. 247—

The sound  
Of bees' industrious murmur.

— *Gloos.*] A Latinism. 'Fervet opus,' Virg. 'G.' iv. 169. Cf. 'A.' iv. 407.

25. *Insect-youth.*] *Youth* is here used, like *pubes* by Latin poets, for the generation just reaching maturity. Virgil (G. iv. 22) uses *juventus* of swarming bees. An *insect* is so called from the appearance it presents of having been *cut into* (Lat. *in-seco*) halves, which look as if joined together by a fine ligature.

26. *Honied.*] Dr. Johnson professed to be grieved by the appearance of this quasi-participle 'in the lines of a scholar like Gray.' But Gray had Milton's authority (S. A. 1,066, Lyc. 140, Il P. 142), and that was sufficient for him. Shakespeare uses the word, 'Henry V.' act i. sc. i. l. 50. There are, moreover, many such formations in the language; e.g. *weather-cocked*, *daisied*, *lettered*, *slippered*, *pied*, &c.; cf. Adams, § 193. Collins, a contemporary of Gray, uses the same word, but spells it *honeyed*. The orthography of Milton and Gray may have been adopted for the sake of avoiding an elision, which would be necessary in a three-syllable word. The *honied spring* is the poetical equivalent for the *flowers* which *spring* may be said (poetically) to have *steeped in honey*.

27. *Float amid the liquid noon.*] A translation of 'nare per aestatem liquidam,' Virg. 'G.' iv. 59. (G.) Prof. Conington (l. c.) compares with this expression Virg. 'E.' ix. 44, 'purā sub nocte,' as another instance 'of what is commonly regarded as time being spoken of as space.'

— *Liquid.*] Transparently clear. The epithet is in keeping with *float*.

28. *Skim.*] The poet probably has in his mind Virg. 'G.' iv. 18, 25, 29, where the bees are described as playing over the water. Cf. Pope's 'Homer Il.' ii. 557; Thomson, 'Summer,' 241.

29. This and v. 30 are adapted from Milton, 'P. L.' vii. 406—

Sporting with quick glance,  
Show to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold—

Which in turn is borrowed from Virg. 'G.' iv. 98—

Elucent alitæ et fulgore cornuscant  
Ardentes auro et paribus lita corpora guttis. (G.)

— *Trim.*] See note on 'Samson Agon.' v. 717 (p. 112, Bombay edit.)  
cf. 'Bard,' 73.

30. *Quick-glancing.*] Quickly, &c. The *hyphen* indicates the close connection between the adverb and the participle, though, strictly speaking, it is not a compound. 'The rule for the admission of double epithets seems to be this: either that they should be already denizens of our language, such as *blood-stained*, *terror-stricken*, *self-applauding*; or when a new epithet, or one found in books only, is hazarded, that it at least be one word, not two words made one by mere virtue of the printer's hyphen.'—Coleridge, 'Biog. Lit.' p. 2, note.

31. The thought of the following stanzas was suggested by a line in the 'Grotto' of Green: 'While insects from the threshold preach.' (G.)

— *Contemplation's.*] A personification. To the reflective moralist contemplating nature with *sober eye*—i.e. with judgment undisturbed by personal participation in the scenes of which he is a spectator—mankind affords a parallel to the world of insects, alike in their origin and in their end. Cf. Thomson, 'Winter,' 312.

33. *They that creep*, i.e. they who, worm-like, never quit the ground from which they sprung; *they that fly*, i.e. they who disport on the gay wings of pleasure. It is not quite clear which of these two classes Gray looks upon as leading the better and higher life, or whether he contrasts them as high and low, good and bad, at all. *The Busy* seems to refer to *they that creep*, *the Gay* to *they that fly*.

35. The *Busy*, who, like the bees, spend their days in frugal industry; and the *Gay*, who, like the butterfly, flit from flower to flower, sipping pleasure from all.

36. *But.*] Only; A.-S. *be-ntan*. See Latham, § 633; Adams, § 407 (b), 659; Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 123, 310, note.

— *Flutter.*] This keeps up the parallel. This word is obviously imitative; see Wedgwood, and cf. v. 10.

37. *Varying.*] Shifting from time to time, as the light and shade shift. The force of the simile should be observed, and the double application of the words to men and to insects. Pronounced as a dissyllable. *Varied*, or *various*, would mean something very different.

38. *Brush'd.*] Metaphorical, like *flutter* (36).

— *Mischance.*] A personification. Par. 'Struck by the rough hand of some chance intruder.' But on the human side of the comparison the sense is wider and vaguer. The prefix *mis-* in this word is said to be of Gothic origin, but it is difficult to say when it represents the true Gothic *mis-*, and when the Fr. *més* or *mé*, from Lat. *minus* or *male*. These similar particles have mutually attracted one another. See Wedgwood, s. v. *Mis.*

39. *Chill'd.*] Cf. Virg. 'Æn.' v. 395—

Sed enim gelidus tardante senectâ  
Sanguis hebet.

Also 'Elegy,' v. 51.

— *Airy.*] In the air. Also spelt *aery*; cf. *fairy* and *faery*. The unsubstantial transitory character of human life is matched by the '*airy dance*' of the flies.

40. *In dust.*] Where they began, there they end (v. 34).

41. *Methinks.*] Cf. *me seems*, it seems to me; Gr. *mir scheint*, Gr. *daírētai μοι*. See Latham, § 589, and add 'needs' to his list of three. 'Needed no more to him to go ne ride' (Chaucer, 'C. T.' 9,849).

— *Low.*] As the reply of the sportive kind is heard only in imagination, their *accents*, or tones, may poetically be described as *low*, being, so to speak, *over-heard*.

42. *Sportive.*] *Frolicsome*; cf. lines 33, 35, 50.

43-50. As the self-justification of those who would make the most of the present life, this is little more than an 'argumentum ad hominem.' But in the mouth of the poet, who is himself the moralist, it seems a regretful doubt whether after all he has chosen the best and most natural life.

44. *Solitary.*] The emphasis on this is explained by what follows.

45. *Thy.*] Like *thou* (v. 46), and *thy* (48, 49), this is in emphatic contrast to *we* (50).

— *Glittering.*] With gaudy plumage, gaily-gilded trim.

— *Female.*] Gray was a bachelor.

46. *Hire.*] Explains what the poet meant by the *insect-youth*, v. 25. Virgil's bees were in his thoughts continually.

— *Hoarded.*] Gray had laid up no treasure for himself, and had inherited but little.

47. *Painted.*] This is a perpetual epithet for wings in all poetry. Cf. Milton, 'P. L.' vii. 434, and Lat. *pictus*.

48. *Is flown.*] Not convertible with *has flown*, the present complete (perfect) of *to fly*. *Flown* is the predicate, and *is* the copula. So also *is sel—is gone*, v. 49.

49. *Spring.*] The time of life answering to the spring of the year. There is an allusion to the subject of the Ode.

50. *We.*] Whose sun is not set, whose spring is not gone, who live instead of speculating on life.

— *Frolic.*] Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 413.

— *May.*] The month when spring ripens into summer. The commentators are lost in admiration at this stroke of art in winding up an Ode on the Spring with a word which is fragrant of vernal associations.

*Note.*—Dr. Johnson sums up his judgment of this Ode thus:—‘It has something poetical both in language and thought, but the language is too luxuriant, and the thoughts have nothing new. The morality is natural, but too stale. The conclusion is pretty.’ That is the comment of a critic keenly alive to Gray’s defects, and a little too blind to his merits. The remark of Twining, that ‘*a description* may be, but a *poem* cannot be, founded upon an entire landscape without human figures,’ should be noticed in connection with this Ode. See Critical Introduction, p. xxviii.

## II.

[This poem made its first appearance with the ‘Elegy’ in Dodsley’s ‘Miscellany.’ The motto, from the ‘Agamemnon’ of Aeschylus, was prefixed on its re-publication.]

1. *Daughter of Jore.*] See the motto. Daughter is the Sanskrit *dahitar*, Ger. *Tochter*. Cf. Scott, ‘L. of L.’ i. 362, note.

— *Relentless.*] Whom no tears can soften, no prayers can melt. Fr. *raalentir* (from Lat. *lentus*, not *lenis*). For the affix *-less*, N. H. G. *-los* (with which cf. *pitiless*, *ruthless*, *numberless*, &c.), see Latham, § 267; Angus, ‘H. E. T.’ § 145.

2. *Tamer.*] Subdler. For the many cognates of ‘tame,’ see Ogilvie.

3. *Iron scourge.*] Fletcher, ‘Purple Island,’ ix. 28, has ‘Affliction’s iron stail.’ Cf. Milton, ‘P. L.’ ii. 90, from which passage Gray has unconsciously borrowed—

When the scourge  
Inexorably and the torturing hour, &c.

For etymology, see Scott, ‘L. of L.’ ii. 213.

4. Cf. Dryden, ‘Abs. and Achit.’ 44: ‘Heaven punishes the bad, and proves the best.’ For *afflict*, in the primitive sense of Lat. *affligo* (to strike down), see Milton, ‘P. L.’ ii. 166.

5. *Adamantine chain.*] Cf. Aesch. ‘Prom.’ v. 6; Milton, ‘P. L.’ i. 48. Adamant and diamond are identical. Adamant (Fr. *aimant*) = loadstone in Bacon, ‘Essay on Travel.’

6. *To taste of.*] To give one a taste of anything has degenerated into something like a slang phrase, but as used by Gray, it is a classicism.

7. *Purple tyrants.*] The *purpurei tyranni* of Horace, ‘Carm.’ i. 35, 12. Purple is the emblem of imperial power. Here it is almost equivalent to *purpled* = clothed in purple.

— *Groan.*] Wedgwood compares W. *grun*, a broken noise. Cf. Fr. *gronder* and *grogner*.

8. Cf. Milton, ‘P. L.’ ii. 703: ‘Strange horror seize thee and pangs unfehl before.’

— *Unpitied and alone.*] An illustration will be found in Edward III. of England. See notes on 'Bard,' antistrophe ii.

9. *Thy sire.*] Jove, v. 1. *Sire* is the subject to designed.

10. *Darling.*] A.-S. *deorling*, *dyrling*, a diminutive from *deor*, dear. (Wedg.) Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 249.

11. *The heavenly birth.*] A classicism, for the offspring of heaven. Growth is more commonly so used. Cf. Appendix II. 2.

12. *To form.*] Some editions incorrectly read *thee form*. *Thee* must be mentally supplied. The mind is considered as something soft and plastic in infancy, and to be *formed*, shaped, or moulded, at the will of the trainer.

13. *Nurse.*] From Lat. *nutrix*, through Fr. *nourrice*. The commentators quote from Sidney's 'Arcadia': 'Ill-fortune, my awful governess' —where the word *governess* is nothing more than a feminine pedagogue, or school-mistress. Gray's use of *nurse* is in keeping with *infant*, v. 12.

— *Rugged.*] Hard-featured; the notion of a *frowning* (v. 17), or severe, expression is conveyed by *stern*.

— *Rigid lore.*] The *lore*, A.-S. *lære*, or *læri* (Wedg.), or learning, which adversity imparts is called *rigid*, or stiff, because its lessons *must* be learned by all who enter the school of adversity.

14. *Many a.*] Cf. III. 22. Notice that we say *many a year*, *many a time*, &c., but cannot say *few a year*, &c.; inverting it, we say *a few years*, &c. Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 56. But it is possible that *many* in modern English may be the result of a convergence between A.-S. *manig* and Fr. *mesnie*. (See Adams, 6,571.) Some suppose 'a' to represent 'of,' and in the construction with 'few' the substantive may be in the genitive.

16. Cf. Pope's 'Elegy,' 44-5—

So perish all whose breast ne'er learn'd to glow  
For others' good, or melt at others' woe.

— *Others.*] See note on 'Venus,' I. 2.

17. *Scared.*] Frightened away. Sc. *skar*, *skair*, to take fright. The O. N. word *skiarr* = the modern E. *shy*, and probably survives in the provincialism *skeery*. Cf. *scare-crow*. (Wedg.)

— *Terrific.*] Striking terror, terrifying. Those who, with no authority, place a comma after *frown* make *terrific* to agree with *Folly's brood*, v. 19, in which case it would be passive, and equivalent to *terror-struck*, *terrified*, but this would be an unjustifiable solecism.

18. *Brood.*] viz. *Laughter*, &c. (III. 83), the offspring of *Folly*, who cares only to please herself. Cf. the opening of Milton's 'Il Penseroso.'

19. *Wild laughter.*] Cf. III. 79, note.

20. The flight of *Laughter*, &c. leaves men the time which they could not call their own while engrossed with the business of pleasure—a business which gives no leisure for reflection, and, therefore, none for self-improvement.

21. *Light.*] Adverbial. The suffix -ly of the dative was originally the mark of these adverbs. On the suffix being dropped, the adverbs and adjectives became undistinguishable. Adams, § 396.

22. Cf. Shaks. 'Tro. and Cress.' act iii. sc. 3. l. 78—

For men, like butterflies,  
Show not their mealy wings but to *the summer*.

Cf. also Ode 35, 25. of Horace's first book, which Gray had in view when writing this Hymn.

23. *Vain.*] Vanity, being engendered by success, is properly represented as the foible of the prosperous. Notice the personifications in this Ode.

24. *For their truth.*] Plight their *troth*, swear their allegiance. That *truth* and *troth*, O. E. *trouth*, if not originally the same word (A.-S. *treowth*), have long been convertible terms is indicated by such passages as this from Shaks. 'Mids. N. D.' act ii. sc. 2. l. 35—

Fair love, you faint with wandering in the woods,  
And, to speak *troth*, I have forgot our way.

It is a good shrewd proverb of the Spaniard: Tell a lie and find a *troth*. Bacon, 'Essay VI.'

— *Are again believed.*] The word *again* implies that these *summer friends*, &c. had been *before* accepted as sincere, till adversity scared them away.

25. *Sable garb.*] For *sable* (It. *zibellino*, Ger. *Zobel*), see Wedgwood, and Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 294, note. 'O'erlaid with black, staid *Wisdom's* hue' (Milton, 'Il Pen.' 16; cf. ibid. 35). *Garb*, though from the Fr. *garbe*, is supposed to be connected with gear. See Morris, 'Spec. E. Eng.' p. 393; Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 419.

26. *Immersed.*] i.e. plunged into, or, as we more commonly say, *sunk* or *buried in*.

— *Rapturous.*] Ecstatic; i.e. *thought* in which you lose the consciousness of self. Cf. note on vi. 2.

27. *Melancholy.*] Cf. 'Il Pen. 12. The etymology of the word points to the cause of what we call *ill-humour*. A *melancholy*, or *atrabilious*, person is one whose irritable or gloomy temperament is caused by, and in turns reacts on, the unhealthy state of the liver and its secretions. See Trench, 'Glossary,' s.v.

— *Silent.*] A disinclination to conversation is one of the evidences of a melancholic temperament. On *Melancholy*, &c. consult note on Milton, 'Sam. Ag.' Bombay ed. 600, p. 103-4.

28. *With leaden eye.*] Leaden, i.e. dull, heavy. Cf. Shaksp. 'Pericles,' act i. sc. 2: 'dull-eyed Melancholy.' Cf. 'Il Pen.' 43, 44. Gray may have remembered Dryden's line, 'Cymon and Iphig.' 57: 'And stupid eyes that ever loved the ground.'

His ruddy lippes wan, and his eyen ledy and holowe.

Sir T. ELYOT (ap. Richardson).

29. *Still.*] Now as ever.

— *Solemn steps.*] Cf. 'Il Pen.' 37, 38—

Come, but keep thy wonted state,  
With even step and musing gait (or gate).

30. *Warm charity.*] This universal benevolence, or philanthropy, is called *warm* possibly from the effects of its exercise, which diffuses *warmth*, i.e. comfort and good cheer, on its objects.

— *General friend.*] Which embraces all who belong to the human family.

31. *To herself severe.*] But to others lenient, or allied to mercy. Lat. *severus*, Gr. *sebomai*, are radically akin to Sansk. *sēv*.

32. *Soft.*] Adverbial; cf. v. 21. Notice that monosyllabic adjectives alone are used adverbially.

— *Sadly-pleasing.*] This compound, which amounts to an *oxymōron* (cf. bitter-sweet, cruel kind), expresses the blending of opposite feelings in the complex mental state which we call *pity*.

33. *Thy.*] Equivalent to an objective genitive. Cf. Angus, 'H. E. T.' § 219.

34. *Chastening hand.*] To *chasten* is to make *chaste* or pure. Cf. Fr. *châtier* (chastier); Lat. *castigo* = to correct, from *castus*. Wedgwood compares *purgare* from *purus*.

35. *Gorgon terrors.*] i.e. terrors such as mythology has associated with the *Gorgon* Medusa, whose countenance turned to stone those that looked on it. Cf. Ovid, 'Met.' iv. 801. The epithet is lost on those who are not familiar with mythology.

36. *The vengeful band.*] Of *Erinyes*, or Furies, who pursued the authors of foul wrong, haunting especially those who were *ἐπιορκοι* (*epiorkoi*), guilty of perjury.

37. *Impious.*] Scil. those who disregard the sacred obligations imposed upon the members of a family, a tribe, or a state, in the due discharge of which obligations consisted the ancient virtue of *piety*. Conspicuous examples of this were Antigone and Æneas.

38. *Mien.*] Fr. *mine*, Ger. *Miene*. ('The Bret. *mīn*', says Wedgwood, 'meant a *beak*, or snout, or projection of land. Then the word was used for the countenance, look; as *rostrum*, a beak, becomes Sp. *rostro*, a face.')

39. *Screaming.*] To *scream* is to cry out from pain or fear. A.-S. *hryman*, It. *sclamare*, Lat. *clamo*. (Wedgwood.)

— *Funereal.*] *Funereal* is now the adjective appropriated to this meaning of deadly, fatal, which is expressed in the Latin *funestus*, Fr. *funeste*. It may here mean no more than *ill-boding*.

40. *Fell.*] A.-S. cruel, barbarous. For the derivation (which is doubtful), see Ogilvie and Wedgwood.

— *Ghastly.*] A.-S. *gast-lie*, like a ghost, weird. *Ghostly*, it is to be observed (originally the same word), is appropriated now to the sense of *spiritual*, or concerned with the human soul or spirit.

41. *Benign.*] Lit. good-natured (*bene-gigno*), kindly, mild—the reverse of *malign* or *malignant*. Richardson's first quotation is from Burke. It was probably coined to match the much older *malignant*. *Benignant* does not occur in Johnson's Dictionary.

43. *Philosophic train.*] Who they are that compose the train of the goddess Melancholy may be learned from Milton, 'Il Pen.' 45-54. For *train*, see note on I. 2.

— *Be there.*] *May thy philosophic train be there*—a prayer.

44. *Wound.*] For etymology, see Ogilvie or Webster. *To hurt by violence* is Johnson's definition.

45. *Generous.*] Noble. Generosity, as a moral quality, was, as its etymology shows, originally considered to argue good-breeding or high descent (cf. v. 41 above), while ignoble or ungenerous traits were held to be characteristic of low-birth and the absence of breeding. (Cf. Appendix II. 2.) Gentle has similarly acquired a moral signification.

— *Extinct.*] Extinguished, dead, and, therefore, needing to be *revived*, or brought back to life. There is a force in the juxtaposition of the two words.

47. *Exact.*] Scrupulous, nice. The clause is a parenthesis in apposition to *me*, the two infinitives in the following line being governed by the imperative *teach*, v. 46.

— *Scan.*] (1) To climb, mount to the top of; (2) to survey from such a position; (3) to mark with accuracy the *feet*, or syllabic combinations, in a verse. Its meaning, to *spy into*, or *scrutinise with careful eye*, is obviously derived from sense (3). See Wedgwood, and Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 461.

48. *What others are.*] Objective clause after *to feel*.

— *Know myself a man.*] To recognise in myself the frailties common to humanity. Cf. III. 60. The sentiment is like that of Chremes in Terence: 'Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto' (Human myself, I recognise my kinship with all humanity).

*Note.*—This *Hymn* was written when the memory of Richard West's death was fresh in Gray's mind. Dr. Johnson's remark on it is this: 'Of this piece, at once rational and poetical, I will not by slight objections violate the dignity.' The student should bear this in mind when reading Johnson's strictures on the other poems.

## III.

[This was the first of Gray's poems which appeared in print (1747) in Dodsley's Miscellany.]

1. *Ye distant, &c.*] This invocation is merely rhetorical or interjectional, and has no other meaning.

— *Spires.*] Anything which tapers to a point is a *spire*, from Lat. *spira*. Hence its application to a *steeple*, &c.

— *Antique.*] Ancient, from Lat. *antiquus* or *anticus*, through Fr. *antique*. Hence the double form *antique* and *antic*.

2. *Crown.*] Cf. vi. 67. ‘Isles that *crown* the Ægean deep’; and note.

— *Watery glade.*] The valley watered by the Thames. For etymology of *glade* see Ogilvie; Webster compares W. *golead*, a lighting, and *goleu-fwlch*, a glade. Tooke traces it to A.-S. *ge-hlad*, covered.

3. *Grateful.*] For the bounty of founders and benefactors.

4. *Her Henry's.*] Henry VI. was the founder of Eton College (G), A.D. 1441.

— *Holy.*] Cf. vii. 90. ‘. . . the meek usurper's *holy* head.’ He was near being canonised (G).

5. Cf. Thomson, ‘Summer,’ 1413: ‘Majestic Windsor lifts his *princely* brow.’

— *Brow.*] A.-S. *bræw*. The imagery which endows hills, &c. with the human features—which makes mountains *frown*, &c.—is very common in eighteenth century poetry. (Cf. vii. 15, 16; and Scott, ‘L. of L.’ i. 174, 251, note.) This is an instance of a reflected metaphor; the primitive meaning of the root being ‘eminence, height,’ from which the application to the human feature is derived and again subsequently turned to the original sense.

6. *Expanse.*] A wide space *opened out* and spread over a considerable surface.

7. *Mead.*] Ogilvie and Richardson, following Tooke, make this A.-S. word to be a participle of *to mow—mowed*. This is doubtful, for similar forms are found in all Teutonic tongues. *Meader* is said to be still the Cornish for a mower.

8. *Turf.*] These go in pairs—*turf* belonging to *lawn*, *shade* to *grove*, *flowers* to *mead*. Cf. Shaksp. ‘Hamlet,’ act iii. sc. i. l. 159: ‘The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword.’

9. *Hoary.*] A.-S. *har*. An epithet appropriate to the god of the stream is here applied to the stream itself. The antiquity of rivers is a commonplace in poetry; cf. Pope's ‘Windsor Forest.’ The idea is borrowed from classical literature, in which the river god is always called ‘Father.’

10. Cf. Thomson, 'Summer,' 1417; Pope's 'Homer,' Il. ii. 753: 'With silver-quiv'ring rills meandered o'er.' Probably Gray intended *silver* and *meandering* to be closely connected. *Way* may be governed by *along*, or taken as a cognate objective with *meanders*.

12. The fields are said to have been 'beloved in vain,' because the love lavished on them had not saved from death the friend who had shared that love. The allusion is to West's death. See Blog. Introd.

13. *Careless.*] Free from all care.

— *Childhood.*] For the termination 'hood' in such words as childhood, manhood, &c., see Latham, § 264; or, better, Adams, § 158.

14. *Yet.*] As yet, Lat. 'adhuc.'

15. *Ye.*] This is said to be the primary form of the nominative and the secondary form of the objective case, but neither etymology nor usage have decisively settled the relative positions of *you* and *ye*. Latham, § 518; Adams, § 230; Angus, 'H. E. T.' § 218.

16. *Momentary.*] As transluent as the breeze on which it is wafted.

17. *Fresh.*] Ferse, A.-S., adverbial, like *afresh*. It may be simply equivalent to *briskly* or *strongly*. The same Teutonic root exists in Fr. *franche*, Ital. *fresco*.

— *Gladsome.*] Active, here = causing joy. Latham notices a tendency of words ending in -some to fall out of use.

18. *Sooth.*] A.-S. gesödhian. The old spelling of this verb has been retained in the text because the final *c*, now universally adjoined to the verb, would mar the rhyme to *youth*.

19. *Redolent of.*] Scented with. The fragrance which the *fresh gales* fling (i. 10) is laden with the associations inseparable from the season of careless youth. Gray acknowledges in a note his obligations to Dryden's 'Fable on the Pythag. System.'

And bees their honey redolent of spring.

20. *A second spring.*] Gray wrote this soon after West's death in June, 1742.

21. *Say, Father Thames, &c.*] To this invocation Dr. Johnson objects that 'Father Thames had no better means of knowing than the poet.' Such a criticism is inconceivable except as a trick to raise a laugh. Unfortunately for the critic, however, some keen-scented admirer of Gray's discovered a precisely parallel, and quite as rhetorical, invocation to Father Nile in 'Rasselas,' upon which Mr. Gilfillan remarks that 'Critics, like liars, should have good memories.' There is a very similar passage in Green's 'Grotto.'

22. *Full many a.*] See note on ii. 14. *Full* is very commonly used in poetry, as here, and so are *right*, *very*, &c. Cf. v. 53.

— *Sprightly.*] *Spright* or *sprite* is a contr. of *spirit*. *Sprightly*, then, is *spirit-like*, life-like, lively, animated.

23. *Disporting.*] *Disport* is seldom used now except as a reflective verb with *oneself*, &c.; in the earlier poets it appears to have had both an active and reflective force, and Richardson quotes it first as intransitive in Spenser.

— *Margent green.*] i.e. grassy banks. Cf. ‘*Comus*,’ 232: ‘By slow Maeander’s margent green.’ *Margent* or *margin*, Fr. *marge*, is from Lat. *margo*, brink or edge. It is confined to poetry, and rare.

24. *Paths of pleasure.*] Cf. Pope, ‘*Essay on Man*,’ iii. 133: ‘To virtue, in the paths of pleasure trod.’

25. *Foremost.*] Before all. The termination *-most*, which marks the superlative, is not a simple word, but a combination of *ost* (est) and the letter *m*, the original A.-S. word being *fyr-m-est*, which got corrupted into *foremost* (Latham, § 332; Adams, § 190, i.). See on v. 32.

26. *Pliant.*] Lithe and supple, capable of rapid tension and relaxation. From the Fr. *plier*, Lat. *plicare*, to fold, bend.

— *Glassy.*] Vitreous, i.e. transparent like glass; one of the many examples in Gray of an adherence to a recognised ‘poetic diction.’

27. *Which.*] This is a more general interrogative than *who*. The original word *what-like* is preserved in the Scotch *whilk*. Observe the characteristic inversion.

— *Captive . . . enthrall.*] A condensed expression for ‘which go hunting the linnet and, having caught him, put him in thraldom?’ Cf. the Latin, ‘*captum interfecit*’

28. *Progeny.*] Offspring; Lat. *progenies*. Cf. *race*, v. 22.

— *Succeed.*] Take the place of the generation just passed away—to which Gray belonged.

29. *Rolling circle's speed.*] In other words—‘who now *trundle their hoops* in the Eton play-ground.’ To drive a wooden or iron hoop with a stick is an amusement of young children, but an Etonian of to-day would despise it.

30. *Urge, &c.*] Used in the Latin sense of *urgeo*, to impel. Cf. Pope, ‘*Dunciad*,’ iv. 592 (which explains Gray’s meaning)—

The senator at cricket urge the ball.

31. *Earnest.*] A.-S. *eornost*, connected perhaps with both *earn* and *yearn*. Antithetical to *idle*, v. 28.

— *Bent.*] The language is more graphic if we press the literal meaning of the word, and imagine the youngsters ‘doubled o’er their books.’ Cf. Lat. *incumbere*.

32. *Murmuring.*] *Labours* in which the lips are ever busy till the task is had by heart.

— *Ply.*] O. G. *plien* (or see v. 26) means, ‘to work at anything closely and importunately’ (Johnson); as, for example, *to ply an oar*. See Scott, ‘*L. of L.*’ 115, note. It is in keeping with *bent*, v. 31.

33. '*Gaints.*'] Prep. *against*, in view of, in expectation of. For anapheresis see Angus, 'H. E. T.' § 191.

— *That bring constraint.*] With the return of the school-hours recurs the necessity for putting on the serious demeanour befitting a serious occupation, which again is shaken off the moment that *liberty*—the negation of *constraint*—is regained. This freedom is relished the more keenly for being fitful and alternating.

35. The following lines are a happy attempt in the mock-heroic style.

36. *Little reign.*] These *bold adventurers*, having explored every nook within the legal school 'bounds,' may fairly look upon themselves as being (within those limits) 'monarchs of all they survey.' For *reign* see note on v. 12.

37. *Descry.*] (1) To announce a discovery by a cry of joy and surprise, (2) to discover (Wedg.). Cf. Cowley, 'Ode to Hobbes,' iv. 7: 'Till unknown regions it *descries*.'

38. *Still.*] Not adversative. 'As they run, they are *all the while* turning to look behind.'

39. Gray may have remembered the lines in Virg. 'Æn.' ii. 729 (the flight of Æneas)—

Nunc omnes terrent auræ, sonus excitat omnis  
Suspensum, etc.

40. *Snatch.*] A Latinism, expressive of the hurried and stealthy nature of their enjoyment. Steal is similarly used.

— *A fearful joy.*] Cf. Virgil's description of Achates' meeting with Æneas, 'Æn.' i. 512—

Obstipuit simul ipse, simul perculsus Achates  
*Lætitidque metuque.*

Cf. Holy Bible, New Test., Matthew xxviii. 8: 'They returned *with fear and great joy.*' *Fearful* is either objective in the sense of *terrible*, or subjective in the sense of *timid*. Here it means merely attended with fear.

41. *Fancy.*] The bright hopes which the young and ardent cherish as to their future career are fed and kept alive by *fancy*. For etymology see Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 200, note.

42. *Less pleasing.*] The object on which Fancy has set their hopes is found less pleasant when attained than it promised to be before the dream of fancy was realised. *Hope* signifies at once the mental emotion, and the external object to which that emotion is directed.

43. *Forgot.*] Past participle of *forget*, A.-S. *forgitan*, N. H. G. *vergessen*. *Forgotten*, the other form, is more commonly used now, while *got*, the past participle of the simple verb to *get*, is more common than *gotten*.

44. Supply *is theirs*. With the expression cf. Pope, 'Eloïsa to Abelard,' 209: 'Eternal sun-shine of the spotless mind.'

45. *Buxom.*] This word (A.-S. and O. E. *bocsum*, Ger. *biegsam* or *beugsam*) seems originally to have implied nothing more than *pliant*, *yielding*. ‘*Buxom*, kind, tractable, and pliable to one another,’ Hollinshead, ‘Plutarch’s Morals,’ 316; ‘The buxome air,’ Spenser, ‘F. Q.’ I. xi. 37; III. ii. 23; Milton, ‘P. L.’ II. 842; V. 270. See Trench, ‘Select Glossary,’ s. v. An old obsolete spelling is *bucksome*. Used more vaguely, it has come to connote comeliness and fleshiness. The *rosy hue* is regarded by N. Europeans as a visible sign of health, its absence as a sign of delicacy.

46. *Wild.*] i.e. subject to no law but the arbitrary dictates of caprice, devoid of conventional propriety. As to *invention*, which is *ever new* because it is inexhaustible, the typical schoolboy is always supposed to have a fund of marvellous tales stored up in his imagination.

47. *Lively cheer.*] Sprightly temper of mind, which springs from physical robustness. With the expression cf. Spenser, ‘Hobbinol’s Dittie,’ 33: ‘In either cheeke depyncten (depicted, pictured) *lively cheere*.’ For etymology see Scott’s ‘L. of L.’ v. 153, note.

— *Of vigour born.*] Exuberant spirits are rarely found in company with a sickly frame.

48. *Thoughtless.*] Because passed without anxious thoughts, to which few boys are given.

— *Easy.*] Refreshing, undisturbed—not made *uneasy* by anxiety for the future or regrets for the past.

49. With this and the next verse cf. Milton, ‘P. L.’ V. 3, which suggests one very important condition of sound sleep—

When Adam waked, so customed, for his sleep  
Was aëry light from pure digestion bred.

Cf. Pope, ‘Imit. of Horace,’ I. 73—

The temperate sleeps and spirits light as air.

51. *Doom.*] A.-S. *dom*, judgment. At first signifying opinion or decision, good or bad (see Spenser, ‘F. Q.’ I. ix. 38; Angus, ‘H. E. T.’ § 65, and ‘Domesday Book’), it came later on to denote especially the final judgment at the end of time. Here it is no more than *destiny*—the fate assigned to them by the *Parcae*, to use the language of pagan religion.

52. *Victims.*] Used *proleptically*, as denoting what they are doomed to be.

53. *Sense.*] Forecast, anticipation. The future is to boys something of which to dream, not think.

54. *Care.*] It may be doubted whether this is a noun or a verb. ‘Take no thought for the morrow’ is a precept which most boys obey to the letter.

55. *Ic!*] This word introduces the contrast between the unconscious security and the actual circumstances of the ‘little victims.’

— *Around 'em.*] This now colloquial and vulgar abbreviation of *them* (the A.-S. *hem*) has been preserved in the text as a good illustration of the variation in matters of taste. Gray's ear could not tolerate the harshness in the juxtaposition of the consonants *d* and *t*, which, nevertheless, is familiar enough to Englishmen. Coleridge, in the ballad style, has 'And it would work 'em woe,' *Anc. Mar.* pt. ii. 10.

56. Some have found grave cause for blame in this adoption of the language of Pagan mythology. But the point of view from which Gray's poetry should be judged has been indicated in the Critical Introduction.

57. *Black.*] A Latinism. In Latin *niger* and *ater*, and in Greek μέλας, were applied to denote *deadly, fatal* qualities.

— *Baleful.*] *Bale*, A.-S. *bæl*, is *misery*. Hence *bale-ful* is like sorrowful. Here it has the secondary meaning of *destructive*, causing *bale* or *misery*. Cf. *fearful*, v. 40.

58. *Show them.*] An invocation, addressed to the imaginary guardians of youth.

— *Ambush.*] O. Fr. *embusche*, It. *emboscar*; F. *bosque*, It. *bosco*, L. Lat. *boscus*, E. *bosky*, *bush*; the place where the assassins, &c. lie in wait is called an *ambush*, as also the actual lying in wait. For another derivative, 'emboss,' see Spenser, 'F. Q.' *passim*; and Scott, 'L. of L.', v. 117, note.

59. *To seize.*] The gerundial infinitive of purpose or design.

— *Murtherous.*] *Murderous*, in all modern editions. Cf. *burthen*, *burden*; *farthing*, *farden*. The A.-S. original has the aspirated dental; see Ogilvie.

60. *Men.*] i.e. human, and therefore mortal, liable to pain, and sorrow, and death. See note on ii. 48.

61. *These.*] Some; cf. *this*, v. 71, and *those*, v. 75. The *fury-passions* occurs in Pope's 'Essay on Man,' iii. 167—

The fury-passions from that blood began.

62. *Vultures.*] In apposition to *passions*, which are called *vultures* because they *prey* upon the vitals. The fable of Prometheus is in the poet's mind.

63. *Disdainful—pallid.*] The first epithet is descriptive of the feeling which commonly accompanies anger, while the second is one of the instances perpetually recurring in poetry of a passion or quality, when personified, being characterised by its effects. Statius, 'Theb.' vii. 49, has, 'Exsangues Metus,' 'Bloodless Fears.'

64. *Shame.*] Is evidenced by a reluctance to come forward into the light. *Skuks* is evidently an onomatopœtic word.

65. *Pining.*] See note on *pallid*, v. 63.

66. Cf. the picture in the 'Faëry Queen,' vi. 23—

But gnawing Jealousy, out of their sight,  
Sitting alone his bitter lips did bite.

— *Rankling.*] Appears to have here an active force, but the verb to *rattle* is intransitive, and means to fester, turn to corruption, &c. It is either from the adjective *rank*, A.-S., or, like *rancid*, from Lat. *ranceo*, to turn putrid. For the termination see Angus, 'H. E. T.' § 146.

67. *That.*] = *Which*; the antecedent is *tooth*.

— *Inly.*] Inwardly. A poetic word.

68. *Wan.*] Connected with 'wane,' and both are from the A.-S. *wanian*; see Ogilvie. Cf. Milton, 'Sonnet,' xiii. 6—

With praise enough for *Envy* to look *wan*.

— *Faded.*] The expression *care-worn* points to the physical effects produced by this vulture of the mind.

69. *Grim-visaged.*] Cf. Shaksp. 'Rich. III.' act i. sc. i. l. 9—

*Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front.*

— *Comfortless despair.*] Cf. Shaksp. 'Com. of Errors,' act v. sc. i. l. 80—

*Grim and comfortless despair.*

70. *Sorrow.*] An instance of *bathos*, or anti-climax. The vague and feeble conception of sorrow, introduced after all the strong, terrible passions, produces an almost ludicrous effect.

71. *This.*] Indefinite, = *one*. It is the object of the verb *tempt*.

72. *The wretch.*] A conventional expression for the wretched or ill-fated man tempted by ambition, but in modern usage the term conveys a stronger sense of blame and disgust.

— *Whirl.*] Hurl, fling. Lat. *sublimem rapere*.

73. *Bitter.*] A.-S. *biter* from *bitan*, to bite, see Angus, 'H. E. T.' § 141; and Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 694.

— *A sacrifice.*] A victim, v. 52. It is in apposition with *wretch*.

74. *Grinning.*] To *grin*, A.-S. *grinnian*.

75. *Stings.*] The defensive weapon with which wasps, scorpions, &c. are armed is called a *sting* both in E. and A.-S. Hence its application to the sharp-piercing weapons with which Falsehood *tries* those who are its victims. The word is very wide-spread in Teutonic languages, and compare the Gk. *στίγμα* (*stigma*).

— *Those.*] Opposed to *this*, v. 71, and *these*, v. 61. It is the object of *try*.

— *Try.*] Some commentators have censured Gray for using a weak word where a forcible one was wanted. But they have overlooked the fact that Gray here, as so often elsewhere, risks the charge of apparent tameness, sheltering himself behind classical authority. He uses *try* in the sense in which its Latin equivalent *tentare* is used by Virgil and Horace. Cf. Virgil, 'Ec.' i. 50: 'Non insueta graves tentabunt pabula fetus'; cf. also 'Geo.' iii. 441; Horace, S. I. i. 80; II. iii. 163.

76. *Hard.*] Incapable of suffering, cruel. With the line cf. Dryden, 'Hind and Panther,' pt. iii. l. 1373: 'Affected kindness with an altered face.'

77. *Far.* 'Which first causes and then mocks at misery.' Observe the omission of the relative.

78. *Keen.*] A.-S. *cen*, N. H. Ger. *kühn*, perhaps connected with *ken* and *can*. The primitive meaning is 'bold.' It has come round to the sense 'sharp,' cutting.'

— *Remorse.*] From Lat. *remordere* (*morsus* = biting or gnawing). It is represented as defiled with blood, to indicate that bloodshed is followed by remorse.

79. *Moody.*] Subject to varying moods or tempers of mind. Gray perhaps borrowed from Dryden, 'Pal. and Arcite,' bk. ii. 1192: 'Madness laughing in his ireful mood.' See Scott, 'L. of L.' II. 271, note.

81. *The tale of years.*] This poetical image for human life is from Shakespeare, 'Othello,' act III. sc. III. l. 265: 'Or, for I am declined into the tale of years.'

82. *Grisly.*] Or *griesly*, as Gray spells it. (1) That which causes shuddering from its hideousness; (2) speckled, gray, powdered, hoary with rime (Wedgwood). It is from A.-S. *grislic*. Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' iv. 701, note.

83. Cf. Dryden, 'State of Innocence,' act v. sc. 1: 'With all the numerous family of Death.' Cf. also Juv. 'Sat.' x. 218—

circumscilic agmine facto  
Morborum omne genus.

And Hor. 'Od.' I. iii. 50: 'nova febrium cohors.'

— *Painful.*] Miserable (passive), or giving pain (active); cf. v. 40, note. The family are the various diseases.

84. *Queen.*] A solecism. No other English poet makes Death feminine. Gray most likely follows the gender of Lat. *mors*. On personification, see Scott, 'L. of L.' I. 264, note.

85. *Racks.*] Tortures, as if they were stretched on the rack, a mediæval instrument by which the legs and arms of a man were slowly drawn out of joint. Cf. VI. 43, note.

— *Fires the reins.*] Inflames the blood.

86. *Labouring.*] Moving with pain or difficulty. Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' I. 119, note.

87. *Rage.*] Commit their ravages. Lat. *scrire*.

88. Poverty comes, without whom the *band* or *family* of Death would be incomplete.

89. *Numb.*] = to *benumb*, to deaden or stupify, make insensible (Wedg.). There appears to be no reason for the final -b, except to give strength. In *num-skull* we have the original word. For etymology see Ogilvie or Richardson.

— *Icy.*] Appropriately used after *numbs*, as torpidity is produced in the highest degree by *cold*.

90. *Slow-consuming.*] Age is here represented as one of the train in attendance on Death, because, if no disease steps in to do the work, time or *age* as surely, though slowly, consumes the vitality which disease has spared. On the relation between the elements of the compound, see Latham, § 262 *sq.*

91. *To each his.*] *Suum cuique.* Supply *are allotted by destiny*, or some such expression. See Angus, 'H. E. T.' § 512; Adams §§ 611, 612.

92. As *men*, i. e. human, they have the sentence of suffering and death in themselves.

— *Groan.*] 'The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,' says St. Paul (Rom. viii. 22). And Aristotle (Eth. Nich. vii. 14) says, *άει πνοέι τὸ ζῶον*, 'all that hath life is ever subject to pain.'

93. He who sympathises with humanity groans for the misery he sees all round him, while he who is incapable of sympathy has pain of his own to groan for.

95. *Yet, ah! &c.*] The poet abruptly closes the contemplation of the misery which is in store for unconscious youth, with the reflection that, after all, not to know the future is present happiness.

96. Sorrow comes often *late*, never *too late*.

98. The season of childhood and youth is passed in a sort of enchanted garden, the spell of which would be broken by self-conscious thought. Cf. Sophocles, 'Aias,' 553—4—

ἐν τῷ φρονεῖν γὰρ μηδὲν ἥδιστος βίος,  
ἔως τὸ χαίρειν καὶ τὸ λυπεῖσθαι μάθης.

For life is pleasantest in thinking nought,  
Ere thou hast learned to sorrow and rejoice.

99. This is one among the many curiously felicitous expressions in Gray which very soon found their way to the lips of every one, and have ever since been part of the stock-in-trade of dealers in sententious morality. Beattie has borrowed from Gray (*Minstrel*, ii. 30).—

Be ignorance thy choice when knowledge leads to woe.

— *Bliss.*] A.-S. *blis.* The happiness which belongs to the blest—*beatis-tudo*, not *felicitas*.

100. 'Tis folly to be wise.] An oxymōron. *To be wise*, i.e. to know what brings the opposite of *bliss* to those who know it, is *folly*; as to remain ignorant would be true wisdom.

NOTE.—Dr. Johnson sums up his criticisms on this Ode with the judgment that 'it suggests nothing to Gray which every beholder does not equally think and feel.' If this is meant as a sentence of condemnation, it is curious to find the same critic eulogising another poem

of Gray's, the Elegy, for possessing precisely this quality. See concluding note on the Elegy. An eminent Etonian, the late Earl of Carlisle, in a lecture on Gray—to be found prefixed to the *Eton edition* of Gray's poems—has found fault with certain minor details in the lines descriptive of the Eton boys' pastimes.

## IV.

[This was written at Walpole's request, and first appeared in vol. ii. of Dodsley's 'Miscellany.]

1. *Lofty vase.*] A bowl of porcelain or earthen-ware, in which gold and silver fish are kept for ornament. *Lofty* is mock-heroic.

2. *China's art.*] The Chinese excel in the manufacture and painting of earthen-ware. Their products are called 'China,' or 'China-ware,' in England.

3. *That blow.*] 'This shows,' says Dr. Johnson, 'how resolutely a rhyme may be made when it cannot be found.' With the expression cf. VI. 5. In Milton, 'Comus,' 993, we have: 'Banks that blow flowers of mingled hue.'

4. *Demurest.*] Most demure or staid. Wedgwood thinks the word a relic of some such phrase as Fr. *de meure* (M. Fr. *mûre*) *conduite* (of steady behaviour), *meure* being from Lat. *maturus*, ripe.

— *Tabby.*] Feline, cat tribe. The word originally means watered silk of a peculiar texture and colour (Fr. *tabis*, Pers. *utabi*). Then it was applied to cats of a certain colour, and afterwards used familiarly of all cats.

5. *Pensire.*] Fr. from *penser*. Contemplative, wistful.

— *Selima.*] The feminine of *Slim*, the name given by Walpole to his favourite cat.

— *Reclined.*] A participle. It must be taken with 'on,' v. 1. It cannot mean that the cat lay upon the edge or side, but near or against it.

6. *Lake.*] Like *vase*, *gulph*, *tide*, *nymph*, &c. this word gives a heroic air to the piece.

7. *Conscious.*] The movement of the tail in a dog or cat indicates the consciousness of an object of pleasure or displeasure. Here the consciousness is attributed to the part which betrays it.

8. *Snowy.*] White as snow; cf. *of snow*, VII. 91. The beard is put vaguely for what we commonly call the whiskers.

9. *Velvet.*] A noun, which, like the others in these lines, is governed by the verb *saw*, v. 12. *Velvet* appears in Hooker and Hackluyt as *veluet*, in B. Jonson as *vellute*, in Chaucer as *velouette*; Spenser has *velet*. All come, as did the manufacture itself, from Italy. The Ital. *velluto*

represents a non-classical Latin word, *villutus*, from *villus*, shaggy hair. The Fr. *velours* is from Lat. *vilosus*, and was once adopted by us.

10. *Tortoise.*] A cat whose coat, or skin is of a dark ground, striped with yellow, is called a tortoise-shell.

— *Vies.*] Equals, if it does not surpass.

11. *Jet.*] Black as jet. *Jet* is a corruption of *gāgātes* (Gr. and Lat.), brown coal, lignite. *Gagas*, whence the original name was formed, was a river and town in Lycia. Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 1.

— *Emerald.*] Green as emerald. See Corn. Lewis, 'Rom. Lang.' p. 107; Angus, 'H. E. T.' § 191. O. Fr. *esmeralde* (M. Fr. *émeraude*), It. *smaraldo*, Gr. *σμάραγδος* (*smaragdos*).

12. *Purred applause.*] Gratified with the reflection of her comely person in the lake, Selima expressed her gratification in the natural way by *purring*. *Purr* is obviously an imitative word. Wedgwood compares the Dutch *korren* for the cooing of a dove.

13. *Still had she, &c.*] She would have continued to gaze if two angel forms, &c.

14. *Angel.*] Adjectival, like *angelic*, i.e. of heavenly beauty. *Beautiful* was the original MS. reading.

15. *Genii.*] The *genius* of a place or person is the guardian deity, who was originally supposed to be born at the same time with the person or place; cf. V. 52.

16. *Tyrian.*] i.e. purple. The dye of this hue was procured both by the Jews and the Greeks and Romans from the Phœnician traders, and their chief city was Tyre.

17. *Richest.*] Richness, when applied to colour, denotes depth and fulness, as *poverty* denotes faintness and scanliness. See Farrar, 'Chaps. on Lang.' p. 211.

18. Cf. Virgil, 'G.' iv. 274—

Aureus ipse, sed in foliis quæ plurima circum  
Funduntur violæ sublucet purpura nigræ.

'Golden itself, but in the wealth of foliage poured around lurks a gleam of the dark violet's purple.' The *sub* in *sublucet* is rendered by the word *betrayed* in the text.

19. *Nymph.*] Possibly a Naiad, or nymph of the spring or fountain, or the word may be simply equivalent to *maid* in v. 25.

20. *A whisker.*] i.e. one side of her face; cf. *beard* on v. 8. This and *claw* are governed by the verb *stretched*.

24. Selima, as a nymph, and therefore a *female*, could not withstand the temptation of *gold*; as a *cat*, she could not forego the chance of feasting on *fish*. As both a *cat* and a *female* cat, the temptation offered by *gold-fish* was irresistible. The truth of the theory which makes the love of gold to be a peculiarly feminine vice, and of that which holds fish to possess peculiar attractions for the feline appetite, is open to dis-

pute. By *gold*, in the former case, we must understand not so much coin as jewels and ornaments generally, which few female hearts have been known to despise.

— *Cat.*] Lat. *catus*, Ger. *Katze*. See Max Müller, ‘Science of Language,’ 1st Series, p. 351; Farrar, ‘Chaps. on Lang.’ pp. 146, 176; Wedgwood, s. v.

25. *Presumptuous.*] From Fr. *présumptueux*, Low Lat. *præsumptuosus*, which strictly meant *inclined to act rashly and without forethought*. So here Selima *presumed* that the reality coincided with the appearance without calculating the means.

27. *Gulf.*] *Between herself and the fish she was greedy to catch.*

28. *Malignant.*] Cf. note on *benign*, II. 41.

— *Fate.*] From Lat. *fari*, to speak, and so originally an utterance of the deity, which not even the speaker could revoke.

— *Smiled.*] As in scorn. See ‘Elegy,’ 105.

29. *Verge.*] From Lat. *vergo*, to incline. The edge of the tub. But cf. Scott, ‘L. of L.’ ii. 694.

30. *Tumbled.*] To *tumble*, which is obviously connected with the Fr. *tomber*, to fall, is now exclusively appropriated to an undignified, ungraceful fall, or to the antics of certain mountebanks, and of a particular species of pigeon.

31. *Eight times.*] This is an allusion to the *nine lives* which popular language has ascribed to the cat from its peculiar tenacity of life.

32. *Mewed.*] i.e. she prayed after her fashion. To *mew*, *miauler*, *miaul*, are all imitative words. It has no connection with the verb *to mew*, or confine, a term originating in falconry.

34. *Dolphin.*] Gr. and Lat. *Delphin*; an allusion to the Dolphin on whose back Arion rode safe to land. See Smith’s ‘Dict. of Antiq.’ (Arion). Hence, it is supposed, comes the Fr. *dauphin*, as title of the heir-apparent, though no reason is assigned.

— *Nereid.*] The Nereids, daughters of Nereus, who were nymphs of the sea (not of ocean), were fifty in number. For their names see Hesiod, ‘Theog.’ 240–264.

35. The mention of the Dolphin and Nereid is in keeping with the *Nymph*, while Tom and Susan—two names which serve as types of a class, namely, domestic servants—are introduced to keep up the notion of the cat.

36. *Favorite.*] The invidious position in which every favourite stands towards those who are aggrieved by the favouritism, each reader can illustrate from his own reading or experience.

37. *From hence.*] A pleonastic use, defensible only on the authority of classical writers. Cf. *de-inde*, *abinde*; cf. Angus, ‘H. E. T.’ § 592; Latham, § 600. *From hence* = from this narrative. Here follows the *envoy*, or moral.

38. *Retrieve.*] Fr. retrouver, to find again; cf. reprieve, Fr. reprover.

39. *Be with caution bold.*] Scil. if you must be bold—i.e. seek adventures abroad—do it with your eyes open, and ‘look before you leap.’

40. *Wandering.*] Means simply restless, unfixed; such eyes as would betoken a heedless heart. See Holy Bible, Proverbs of Solomon, iv. 25: ‘Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look stright before thee.’ Cf. also ‘Elegy,’ 74.

41. *Heedless.*] *Heed* (A.-S. hedan, O. H. G. huotan, and appearing under various forms in all Teutonic languages) is perhaps connected with hide, and some say with Lat. *cantus*, *cavere*.

42. *Glisters.*] Glitter, glister, glisten, are all substantially the same word. Cf. Du. *glijsteren*, A.-S. *glisian*, O. N. *glitra* (Wedgwood). With the thought cf. Chaucer, ‘Yemanne’s Tale,’ 164—

But all things which shineth as the gold  
Ne is no gold, as I have herd it told.

## V.

[The present title of this poem was adopted by Gray at the suggestion of Mason.]

1. *Curfew.*] *Curfeu*, the orthography in Gray’s MS., is one step nearer the Norman *couver-feu*. *Couer-feu* seems to have been another intermediate form; see Richardson, and cf. kerchief = *couverchef*.

— *Tolls.*] To toll (v. t. and n.). Perhaps, like *knell*, an onomatopœtic word. M. W. *tolo* means a din. It is said that Gray had originally inserted a comma after *tolls*, but the printer omitted it, and the poet adopted this accidental emendation.

— *Knell.*] Cf. Welsh *cnil*, A.-S. *cnyllan*, to ring; also found in other Teutonic languages.

When thou dost hear a *toll* or *knell*,  
Then think upon the passing bell.

Cf., too, Shaksp. ‘Hen. IV.’ pt. ii. act i. sc. 1, l. 103—

And his tongue  
Sounds ever after as a sullen bell  
Remembered tolling a departing friend.

— *Parting.*] Departing, going away; from Fr. *partir*.

2. *Lowing.*] Participle of the v. n. to *low* or *bellow*, used of the noise peculiar to horned animals, cows and oxen. It is possibly onomatopœic like the Lat. *mugio*, and the Fr. *mugir*, but it is an old word found in A.-S., *bellan*.

— *Winds.*] To *wind*, as here used, is defined by Johnson ‘to proceed in flexures,’ i.e. to take a zigzag or tortuous course, as oxen following one after the other across a broad field would do. There is no reference to the movement of the limbs.

— *Lea.*] Untilled land; A.-S. *leag*, *lag*, *lah*. It is preserved in such local names as *Stoneleigh*, *Madding-ley*. See Scott, ‘L. of L.’ ii. 176, note; and Latham, § 56. It is the same word with *law*=a local usage.

3. *Ploughman.*] or *plowman*=one who drives the *plough* or *plow*. ‘This word, like the Slavonic *ploug*, has been identified with the Sans. *plava* (from radix *plu*=to sail)=a ship, and with the Greek *ploion*.’ ‘In English dialects *plough* is still used in the general sense of waggon or conveyance.’ Cf. Lat. *plastrum*, wagon, and Sans. *aritra*, rudder; Lat. *aratum*, plough. Max Müller, 1st Series, pp. 242-3, and 254.

— *Plods.*] To *plod* is defined as to ‘travel with pain and labour.’ Thus it is metaphorically applied to one who, without genius, is laboriously industrious.

4. *To me.*] i.e. to the narrator, who is speaking in his own person.

5. *Glimmering.*] In the twilight. To *glimmer*=(1) to shine faintly, (2) to be seen indistinctly (because in an uncertain light).

— *Landscape.*] Often spelt *landskip*. *Landscape*, A.-S. *sceapan*, to shape or form, a prospect or open view of country. See Latham § 267.

6. *Holds.*] The verb governs *air*, the subject being *stillness*. Consequently *holds* is used like the Lat. *tenet* and the Gr. *καρέχει* (*katekhei*), in the sense of *possesses*, *has taken possession of*, not in the sense of *hold* in ‘to hold a festival,’ &c.

7. *Save.*] This word introduces the exceptions to the general statement of the line before. One might imagine this preposition to be the imperative of the verb to save. It is, however, the Lat. adj. *salvus*, which was used with nouns in the ablative absolute with almost the same meaning as our preposition. The use of the Fr. *sauv* proves this, and cf. *except*.

— *Droning.*] To *drone*. An onomatopoëtic word. As a noun it is the name of the non-working bee from its sound. Cf. Shaksp. ‘Macbeth,’ act iii. sc. 2, l. 42—

The shard-borne *bettle* with his *drowsy* hums.

8. *Drowsy.*] Wordsworth, in his ‘Descriptive Sketches,’ talks of a ‘*drowsy-tinkling bell*.’ The A.-S. *dreasan* means to *droop*, and perhaps we may have in this the source of the word. But no instance is quoted of its occurrence by Richardson earlier than Sir T. More (1530); and the Du. *droosen* signifies to *sleep*.

9. *Yonder.*] This is a graphic touch, requisite in a descriptive poem. Cf. below, *those, that*. It is doubtful whether -d- in *yonder* is part of the root or of the termination. See Latham, § 356; Adams, § 241.

— *Ivy-mantled.*] Mantled or clad with ivy. Cf. *moss-grown*, i. 13.

10. *Moping.*] This is almost an equivalent of the epithet which Ovid gives to the owl—*ignavus bubo* (*Met.* v. 550). Cf. Thomson's 'Winter,' 114; Virg. 'Æn.' iv. 462. *Owl* = Lat. *ulula*.

11. *Bower.*] A.-S. *bur* = a place of retirement and privacy. See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. v. 283, *note*.

12. *Reign.*] Place of sway, estate. An expression borrowed from classical writers. Virgil uses it frequently; cf. 'G.' iii. 476, and 'E.' i. 70 : 'Post aliquot mea regna videns mirabor aristas.'

13. *Rugged.*] Cf. Milton's 'Comus,' 354 : 'Or against the rugged bark of some broad elm.' The descriptive introduction having been completed, the *human* interest is awakened.

— *Yew-tree.*] The yew (*taxus*) to which ancient writers constantly attached some such epithet as *funesta* (deadly), was fabled to grow in Hades (probably because of its poisonous berry). Both it and the cypress have been always associated with death.

14. *Heaves.*] From this verb comes the subst. *heaven* = the sky raised aloft from the earth. The A.-S. verb is *hebban*.

— *Mouldering.*] *Putris*, or crumbling (ready to fall in pieces), is the regular Virgilian epithet for the clod or glebe. With the line cf. Parnell's 'Night-Piece,' 29, from which it is probable that Gray has borrowed.

15. *Narrow cell.*] *Scil.* the grave. Cf. Ossian, 'Oithona:' 'The narrow house is pleasant to me and the grey stone of the dead.' Though the epithet *narrow* may appear superfluous as applied to a cell, which has the notion of narrowness inseparably associated with it, we must remember that *cella* originally was simply a storehouse or place of deposit, without reference to size.

16. *Rude.*] Uneducated, untrained; cf. i. 13. 'Rude and moss-grown beech.' See Latham, § 303.

17. *Incense-breathing.*] Cf. 'P. L.' ix. 192-4—

Now, when as sacred light began to dawn  
In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed  
Their morning incense.

18. *Sicallow.*] *Orthogōē* (early-wailing) is Hesiod's epithet for the swallow; 'W. and D.' 566.

— *Twittering.*] As perpetual an epithet of a swallow in English as *arguta* of *hirundo* in Latin. See Virgil, 'G.' i. 377.

19. *Clarion.*] The name of a wind instrument as clarinet still is. Fr. *clairon*, Lat. *clarus*, clear. The termination -on is the -o of the Lat. *campo*, *sermo*, &c. It has not the augmentative force which it bears in Ital., whence we have *poltroon*, *bassoon*, &c. Cornwall Lewis, 'Rom. Lang.' p. 132. Cf. Milton, 'P. L.' vii. 443—

The crested cock whose *clarion* sounds  
The silent hours.

And Shaksp. 'Hamlet,' act i. sc. 1, l. 150-3.

The cock that is the trumpet to the morn  
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat  
Awake the god of day.

The *cock* is, like the Sanskrit *kukkuta*, an imitative word repeating the cry of the bird. Cf. Farrar, 'Chaps. on Lang.' pp. 144, 152.

— *Echoing horn.*] What horn is meant is explained by Milton, 'L'Allegro,' 53-6.

Oft listening how the hounds and *horn*  
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,  
From the side of some hoar hill  
Through the high wood *echoing* shrill.

In both passages *echoing* means *waking echoes*, to do which it must be loud or *shrill*.

20. *No more.*] Never again, as of old.

— *Lovely bed.*] The literal *bed*, not the metaphorical (the grave), is probably here meant. At all events, there is a sort of double-meaning.

21. *For them.*] That is, though the hearth may blaze, it will no longer be *for them* or for their benefit. With the picture cf. Hor. 'Od.' II. xiv. 21, and Lucret. iv. 907—

Nam jam non domus accipiet te laeta neque uxor, &c.

22. *Busy housewife.*] Cf. Thomson's 'Winter,' 311—

In vain for him the officious\* wife prepares  
The fire fair-blazing and the vestment warm.

Cf. Hor. 'Epod.' ii. 39. That so richly suggestive a word as *housewife* should have fallen into total disuse, preserved only in its corruption *hussey*, is a significant fact in word history.

— *Ply.*] See note on iii. 32.

— *Care.*] Task, work. The abstract for the concrete.

23. *Sire.*] For the decay of senior into sire, and of sire into sir, see Max Müller, 2nd Series, p. 255.

— *Lisp.*] As infants, they have not yet learned to speak clearly. *Lisp* in its ordinary acceptation describes the sound which some make instead of -s- by putting the tongue between the teeth, but it is used of any imperfect utterance.

24. With the picture cf. Virg. 'G.' ii. 523; and (Virgil's model) Lucr. iii. 908—

Nec dulces occurrent oscula nati  
Præripere.

Lucretius' touch in *præripere* (to be the first to snatch) is truer than any in Virgil or Gray.

\* Mindful of her duties.

25. *Sickle.*] The instrument used in reaping, a reaping-hook. For etymology, see Ogilvie, s. v. The reaper, ploughman, teamster, and woodman appear successively in the stanza as varieties of the labouring class.

26. *Stubborn glebe.*] The thought of the stanza is this:—These simple yeomen, who now sleep in their village churchyard, once brought nature into subjection; making the harvest *yield* to their sickle, the stubborn clod *break* in pieces under their plough, the forest trees *bow* to their stroke. The classical scholar is reminded of the dominant tone of the Georgics of Virgil.

27. *How jocund.*] With what cheerful hearts. The word is strange, and awkward, and barely English.

— *A-field.*] To field. Cf. Milton, 'Lycidas,' 27: 'We drove a-field.' The prefix *a* is the A.-S. *an*=*in* or *on*. *Field* has no connexion with the verb to *fell*. (Morris.)

28. Cf. Spenser, 'February': 'But to the roote bent his *sturdy stroake*.'

— *Sturdy.*] Provincially signifies dizzy, and is therefore probably derived from the same source as Fr. *étourdi*. Stun may be connected.

29. *Ambition.*] The Ambitious, just as *Grandeur* (v. 31) stands for the Great. See Angus, § 202.

— *Useful.*] And as such no proper subject of ridicule.

30. *Homely.*] Enjoyed at home, domestic; and so common, trite, vulgar. In American English the sense has been pushed so far that the word means *ugly*.

31. *Disdainful.*] Expressive of disdain. From Lat. *dedignor*, through O. Fr. *desdaigner*.

32. *Annals.*] *Annales* or year-books are records of events classified by years. On the line see remarks in Critical Introduction, p. xxix.

33. *Heraldry.*] From the Fr., but a Teutonic word, some say derived from O. H. G. *haren*, to cry out (Ogilvie); but others, more probably, from *hariwalt*, O. H. G. *heri*, army; *walten*, to serve.

34. *Par.* The personal importance which beauty confers on its possessor, and the social influence which necessarily belongs to the rich.

35. *Hour.*] Of death which, when it comes, reduces all to one level. Cf. Hor. Carm. i. iv. 13.

36. This line is said to be a literal translation from Bartholinus, to whom Gray is also indebted in his Norse poems.

37. For the original reading of these two lines see Various Readings.

38. *Trophies.*] Such as are raised upon the graves of conquerors, though the usage of the word is so extended that other than military heroes may be meant.

39. *Aisle.*] O. Fr. *aisle*, M. Fr. *aile*, Lat. *ala*, wing. But this does not account for the *-s-*, unless we suppose Lat. *axilla* to have been the source. Some suggest *isle*, Fr. *île*.

— *Fretted.* Cf. Milton 'P. L.' i. 717: 'The roof was *fretted* gold.'

'The *roof* o' the chamber—With golden cherubims is *fretted*,' 'Cymbeline,' act ii. sc. 4, l. 87. To fret, A.-S. fretan, to eat, or rub away. Tennyson, 'The Brook,' v. 17: 'With many a curve my banks I *fret*.'

— *Vault.*] Over-arching roof. It is not used in contra-distinction to *aisle*, to indicate a different thing.

40. *Pealing.*] 'There let the *pealing* organ blow,' 'Il Pen.' 161; and see Scott, 'L. of L.' v. 60, note.

— *Anthem.*] A sacred song sung by two opposite choirs. Gk. ἀντί. against, φωνή, voice; Lat. antiphonia, O. Fr. antienne, A.-S. antefen. Notice the A.-S. stefn, E. stem. (Wedg.), and cf. Fr. venin, Eng. venom, Fr. migraine, Eng. megrim.

41. *Storied urn.*] 'And *storied* windows richly dight,' 'Il Pen.' 159. Here, as in Milton, (l. c.) *storied* is equivalent to 'inscribed with story.' More often it means celebrated in song or fable. The *urn* is not the receptacle for the ashes of the dead, but merely an ornamental monument.

— *Animated.*] Cf. Pope, 'Temple of Fame,' 73: 'Heroes in *animated* marble frown.' A *bust*, i.e. a statue of the upper half of the body, is *animated* when it has the semblance of life, and seems to breathe.

42. *Mansion.*] The body is the temporary abode or abiding-place (mansion) of the spirit or breath.

— *Fleeting.*] Fugitive. An adjective, not a participle, in meaning. The verb to *fleet* is usually active; 'To fleet the time away,' Shaksp. 'As you Like It,' act i. sc. 1. l. 124.

43. *Honour's.*] Respect or reverence shown in words.

— *Provoke.*] Call forth. Cf. revoke, evoke, invoke—all from Latin verbs, compounded with prepositions. The ordinary sense in which *provoke* is now used is very easily traced to its etymological meaning as borne in this passage.

44. *Dull cold.*] These epithets are found side by side in Shaksp. 'Hen. VIII.' act iii. sc. 2, l. 484: 'And sleep in *dull cold* marble.'

45. *Pregnant with.*] Big with, great with, rich with, &c., are all varieties of the same metaphor.

— *That.*] Has hands for its antecedent, and is the nominative to the verb *might have swayed*, the object being *rod*.

47. C<sup>e</sup>none, writing to Paris (Ovid, 'Epp.' v. 86), says: 'Sunt milii quas possint sceptr'a decere manus.'

48. Cf. Lucr. ii. 412-13—

Musæa mele . . . quæ  
Mobilibus digitis expergefacta figurant.

— *Living lyre.*] This expression was a poetical commonplace from Cowley downwards.

49. *Knowledge.*] Cf. *science*, v. 119.

50. *Spoils of Time.*] The book of knowledge in its pages displays the wealth accumulated by Time, the universal spoiler.

51. *Chill.*] Explained by *froze*, v. 52. See note on *warm*, v. 87.

— *Penury.*] Lat. *pénuria* is want or scarcity. The root pen is seen in the Greek words *πένουμαι* (penomai), *πείνα* (peina), *πόνος* (ponos).

— *Noble rage.*] Rage, like the *furor* or frenzy, lacking which (said Democritus) no man could be a great poet, was in eighteenth century poetry a synonym for poetical inspiration. Thus Pope (Prol. to *Cato*, 43): ‘Be justly warmed with your own native *rage*.’

52. *Genial.*] Has brought with it from Latin its sense of kindly, joyous, festive. The root signifies production, fertility, generation.

53. *Full many a.*] See note on iii. 22. With the sentiment cf. Bishop Hall’s ‘Contempl.:’ ‘There is many a rich stone laid up in the bowels of the earth, many a fair pearle in the bosome of the sea, that never was seen nor never shall be.’

— *Of purest ray serene.*] This certainly sounds like tautology. But *serene* introduces the idea of calm, stedfast brilliancy. *Ray*, O. Fr. *rai*, M. Fr. *rayon*, It. *raggio*, Lat. *radius*.

54. *Unfathom'd.*] To fathom is to measure distance by fathoms, one fathom being equal to six feet; but see Scott, ‘L. of L.’ i. 207, note.

55. *To blush.*] To blush, when said of a flower, is equivalent to *bloom*.

56. *Waste.*] Spend to no purpose.

— *Desert air.*] The air of a place where there are none to recognise and set the true value on the sweetness.

57. *Hampden.*] John Hampden, whose boldness in refusing to pay ship-money (1637) was the signal for open resistance to Charles I.: see ‘Stud. Hume,’ p. 391. *May rest* is the verb to *Hampden* as well as to *Milton*.

— *Dauntless.*] Which nothing can daunt. *Undaunted* breast would mean *which nothing ever has daunted*. The one expresses a fact, the other an attribute.

58. *Little tyrant.*] Such was Cyrus in his boyhood, as we learn from Herod. i. 114.

— *With-stood.*] *With* bearing the sense of against, as in *with-hold*, and as in the A.-S., and N. H. G. *wider*.

59. *Mute.*] Whose noble rage never found vent in song. Milton without his poems would be *dumb*.

60. *Cromwell.*] See ‘Student’s Hume,’ pp. 417–60. The amount of guilt attaching to Cromwell’s conduct varies of course according as we consider him to be a fearless patriot, or an unscrupulous military despot. Whatever view may be taken, he was certainly unsparing of blood. *Guilt* Tooke connects with wile and guile. It is more correctly traced to A.-S. *gildan*, to pay, and means a debt or fine.

61. *To command.*] The government of this is in v. 65, *Their lot forbade*. To command applause is to get it almost by force, to extort it from those who are unable to withhold it.

62. *To despise.*] Before one can *despise* the threats of others, one must be above and out of their reach.

63. *Smiling.*] This is either, like *latus ager* in Virgil, equivalent to *fruitful*, or it expresses the gratitude for bonny which the land and its inhabitants are by a metaphor supposed to feel.

64. Par. And see, in the glad contented looks of the people, the best record of their own acts.

65. *Their lot.*] Their *destiny obscure*, v. 30.

— *circumscribed.*] Synonymous with *confined*, v. 66. The past indicative, and not the participle. To *circumscribe* is to draw a line all round that which you wish to *confine* or keep within bounds.

66. *Their growing virtues.*] In prose this would stand, *the growth of their virtues.*

67. Cf. Pope's 'Temple of Fame,' 347 : 'And swam to empire through the purple flood.'

— *Wade.*] A strong metaphorical exaggeration. For etymology see Ogilvie.

68. Cf. Shaksp. 'Hen. V.' act iii. sc. 3, l. 10 : 'The gates of mercy shall be all *shut up.*'

69. The metaphor in this line is obvious. The living conscious truth within a man is represented as struggling into birth, whilst he conceals this truth and also the pain which it gives him in its efforts to come forth. To *hide these pangs* is to stifle free inquiry and the propagation of truth. To do this was put out of their power by their obscure lot.

70. To quench the blushes of shame is to destroy shame by making it shameless. The inward feeling of shame or modesty, Pudor, is manifested outwardly by blushes. To quench these, then, is to destroy the feeling of which they are evidences. The two lines describe the wilful extinction of intellectual and moral honesty.

— *Ingenuous.*] Natural, not assumed; of native, not of foreign growth. Lat. *gigno*, *genui*, *ingenuus*.

71. Par. 'Or flatter the self-love of the proud and luxurious rich by adulatory verses.' Flattery is commonly spoken of as incense, the sweet perfume burnt in honour of the Gods. The Muse's flame is the inspiration of the poet.

73. *Madding.*] The intransitive verb 'to mad' has long been obsolete except in this participle, which is itself extremely rare in modern E. 'Poul, thou maddest, many lettres turnen thee to woodnesse,' Wicliff, 'Bible,' Acts, ch. xxvi. 24. 'But now from me his madding mind is start,' Spenser, 'Shep. Cal.' Cf. 'Far from the madding worldling's hoarse discords,' Drummond, pt. i. son. 49.

74. Being far removed from the strife their *sober* (antithetical to *madding*) wishes never learned (from the example of others) *to stray*, or wander far from home.

75. *Sequestered.*] Retired. *Sequester* in Roman law was an arbitrator or umpire in a suit who, having no personal concern in the case, was said to stand apart (*secus*). Hence the application of sequestered to persons or places which stand apart from, as if unconcerned in, the affairs of the world around them. Though it seems never to have borne this vague derivative sense in Lat., yet the first English writers who employed the word were familiar with this meaning (see Richardson).

76. *Tenour.*] From Lat. *teneo*, to-hold; it originally meant a holding on, a continuous career or course, which sense it bears in this place. *Hasta fugit servatque cruenta tenorem*, Virg. 'Æn.' x. 340. Spelt without the 'u' it seems, according to the best dictionaries, to have been appropriated to a clef in music. Any one who is interested in the controversy as to *tenor* and *tenour*, is referred to 'The Queen's English,' p. 13, and 'The Dean's English' (5th ed.), p. 49.

77. *Yet.*] Nevertheless. This word resumes the argument from v. 40: all between vv. 41-76 being a digression.

— *Ev'n these.*] *These* is emphatic. *Ev'n* is pronounced as a mono-syllable, *e'en*.

— *Insult.*] The literal etymological meaning of the word is the best here.

78. *Frail.*] Not proof against the assaults of time. Notice frail and fragile, both from the Lat. *fragilis*. The former occurs in Chaucer; the earliest instance quoted by Richardson of the latter is in Hall.

78. *Still.*] Strengthens *yet*; or it may perhaps mean that the monuments still exist.

79. *Uncouth.*] See Latham, § 282, 2; Angus, § 71; Scott's 'L. of L.' i. v. 68. The primitive meaning is 'unknown,' *couth* being from *ken* or *can*.

— *Rhymes.*] *Rhimes* was the old spelling. Fr. *rime*, It. *rima*. Here it simply means doggrel verses.

— *Shapeless.*] This word expresses the absence of that form or beauty the presence of which is denoted by the word *shapely*. Cf. the Lat. *deformis* and *formosus*.

80. *Implores.*] The words of the inscription on the memorial contain a request for sympathy. Notice that *implores* is the only verb in this sentence, which begins at *yet*. *Erected* is a participle, but it has after it the infinitive of purpose, *to protect*.

— *Passing.*] i.e. given in passing, by the passer-by. The word also conveys a notion of transitoriness, slightness, as if the emotion roused were not a deep one.

81. *The unlettered Muse.*] (i.e. the unlearned rustic verse-maker) substitutes the name and age of the dead for the pompous epitaph or elegiac stanzas in which the rich are commemorated after death: unlettered = illiterate; cf. 'man of letters,' and such expressions. *Spell* may be taken literally.

83. *Many a.*] See note on ii. 14, and Scott's 'L. of L.' i. v. 56. Notice that *teach* is plural. The *holy texts* are passages from the Holy Bible.

83. *She strews.*] She (i.e. the Muse) scatters over the various grave-stones. To *strew* or *strow* is the A.-S. *stredan* or *strewian*.

84. *Rustic moralist.*] The villager, whose morality does not extend beyond the range of sundry wise maxims drawn from the experience of past generations, and handed down from father to son. *Disce vivere* and *Disce mori*, 'Learn to live' and 'Learn to die,' are not uncommon mottoes for a tombstone.

85. An imaginary objector is answered. The following lines are a protest against the Lucretian, Epicurean, or materialistic view (iii. 842), which looks on death as the end of all things, and denies a future existence.

— *Dumb forgetfulness.*] Oblivion tells nothing of the past, and is therefore called *dumb*. But is *prey* in apposition to *who* or to *being*? If to the latter, then *dumb* means blank, silent, without sound or life.

— *A prey.*] Given over to, or, as we say, the victim of anything. The metaphor being from a wild ravenous beast. *Prey* is from Lat. *praeda*, through Fr. *proie*.

86. *Pleasing anxious being.*] Existence, however full of *anxiety*, is always *pleasing*. Cf. the 'Animula vagula, blandula' of Hadrian.

87. *Warm.*] This word recalls the associations of comfort and cheerfulness, which are the result of sunshine, just as *cold* and *chill* are associated with discomfort and misery.

87. *Precincts.*] Lat. *præcinctio* was the lobby or gallery which ran round or girdled (*præcingo*) a Roman amphitheatre. Hence, by the 'precincts of a building' is meant the immediate neighbourhood. *Day* for 'life' is a rendering of the classical 'lux'; cf. 'abrumperet lucem,' &c., Virg. 'Æn.' iv. 631, &c.

88. *Nor cast.*] 'And did not cast;' or 'without casting.' A *longing* look is a look expressive of longing or desire.

89. *Fond.*] Loving and beloved. Unlike *silly*, and some other words, it has gradually reversed its meaning from bad to good, the original sense being *foolish, doting*. For *parting*, see note above on v. 1.

— *Relies.*] Perhaps a hybrid from *re* and *lie*. Gray may intend that this derivation should suggest itself, and add a shade to the meaning.

90. *Pious.*] The *eye closing* in the sleep of death asks for (requires) *some pious drops*, i.e. some (not many) tears shed by those whose near connection with the dying makes mourning a *duty*, and tears the fulfilment of a sacred obligation. See note on ii. 37.

91. Cf. Lucr. iii. 944—

Denique si vocem rerum Natura repente  
Mittat.

92. *Wonted.*] See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. v. 408, note. Par. 'Even in our ashes, i.e. even when no more of us is left than may be contained in an urn (v. 41), the wonted fires of those ashes are still alive'; i.e. the desire

to be remembered by our friends is as keen as it was wont to be when we were alive. He may not be actually thinking of the state of the soul after death, but may be poetically regarding the inscription on the tomb as the real expression of a dead man's wishes. Gray acknowledges in a note his obligations to a sonnet of Petrarch.

93. *For thee.*] As for thee, *quod ad te attinet*. The poet is addressing himself.

— *Mindful.*] Lat. *memor*; not forgetful of, or wanting in due respect to the dead.

94. *Artless.*] Their tale or story is a simple one, and neither has nor needs the tricks of art to set out and embellish it.

95. *If chance.*] If perchance, or by chance; if haply, like 'si fors' in Latin for 'si forte,' from which Gray imitated this un-English usage.

— *Contemplation.*] Cf. i. 31. *Led* is in agreement with *spirit*, v. 96.

96. *Kindred.*] Who would show his affinity or kinship by looking upon the poet's tomb as the poet had looked on the tombs of the peasants. On *kin* and *kind*, &c. see Trench, 'Study of Words,' pp. 41, 42.

97. *Swain.*] An A.-S. word, now exclusively poetical; see Ogilvie. It has nothing to do with swine.

98. *Peep of dawn.*] Allusions to the eye of day are very common in poetry. Cf. VII. 124. Dawn, or Aurora, is represented as opening her eyelids. Cf. Lycidas, 25–6—

Together both ere the high lawns appeared  
Under the opening eye-lids of the morn.

99. *Brushing . . . away.*] On *brush* see note on i. 38.

Though from off the boughs each morn  
We brush mellifluous dews.—MILTON, 'P. L.' 428.  
And from the boughs brush off the evil dew.

Ib. 'Arcad.' 50.

100. *To meet the sun.*] Scil. To see it rise above the horizon.

— *Upland.*] Cf. 'Upland hamlets,' Milton, 'L'All.' 92; and such compounds as inland, moorland.

101. *Nodding.*] Any swaying up and down, or to and fro, movement of the head or crest is called *nodding*. *Nod* according to Wedgwood has no immediate connection with Lat. *nulus*, *nuto* (Gr. *νεύω*). Tooke makes it a past participle of A.-S. *hnigan*, to bend, but it does not seem to occur in earlier authors. Richardson's first instance is from Beaumont and Fletcher. On *yonder* see note on v. 9.

— *Beech.*] A tree of the genus *Fagus*, large and shady. For etymology see Max Müller, 2nd Series, pp. 216, 222, &c.

102. *Wreathes.*] To wreath is to make into a wreath. Cf. A.-S. *wraed*.

102. *Fantastic.*] So called because fantasy (phantasy) or fancy is arbitrary, irregular. See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. v. 200, note. The root, as is often the case in old trees, showed above ground.

103. *Listless length.*] The moral epithet *listless* is transferred to the word which stands for the body or human figure. Tennyson, in 'The Miller's Daughter,' has 'a long and *listless* boy.' For the verb *list* see Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 455, but this is from *list* or *lust*, to desire; see Ogilvie.

— *Noon-tide.*] Tide=Ger. Zeit. An illustration of Grimm's law. The simple word is now usually confined to the periodic ebb and flow of the sea.

— *Would he.*] *Would* (in such idioms as, he would say, he would go, &c.) seems to be equivalent to 'was wont to say,' &c., 'was in the habit of saying,' &c. Cf. 'would run,' VI. 118.

104. *Pore.*] Occurs with this sense of intent gazing in Chaucer, 'C. T.' 5877, &c. It may be connected with 'peer'; and some refer it to 'bore' in the sense of penetrating.

— *Babbles.*] Brooks have babbled or tinkled ever since poets began to sing. Cf. Horace to his Bandusian spring, 'Carm.' iii. xiii. 15. For the onomatopœia and its cognates see Farrar, 'Chap. on Lang.' p. 159. And cf. Shakespeare, 'As You Like It,' act. ii. sc. 1. 1. 16.

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks.

105. The stanza here omitted by Gray supplied the evening to the picture. See Various Readings.

— *Smiling as in scorn.*] Smiling as if scornful, not as one would smile in joy.

— *Hard by.*] An older and similar idiom is 'fast by,' Milton, Od. ii. 21. Richardson quotes no instance of 'hard by' earlier than Shakspeare. Perhaps hardly and hardly being used first as='scarcely,' and then (Chaucer, 'C. T.' 9186) as='almost,' gave occasion to this idiom in which *hard*='nearly, near, close.' Cf. Gk. σχεδόν (skhēdōn).

106. *Muttering.*] The almost invariable practice of solitary men.

— *Wayward fancies.*] The epithet is a natural one, as fancy brings together images which have no connection moral or natural, and is subject to no law. *Wayward* originally='wilful.' Chaucer speaks of 'wayward tyrants.' Now, its usual sense is fickle or unstable. For etym. compare froward and its opposite toward in Bacon, *Essay xix.*

107. *Woeful wan.*] This is not equivalent to *woefully wan*, but a combination of gauntness and wretchedness in the extreme. Notice the effect of the alliteration. Cf. Spenser, 'January,' 8, 9:—

For pale and *wanne* he was, (alas the while!)  
May seeme he *lored* or else some *care* he tooke.

— *Forlorn.*] Ger. verloren, abandoned, a past participle. On this prefix *for* answering to Ger. *ver*, see 'Stud. Man. Eng. Lang.' lec. ix. p. 141. It was once in common use, but it is only retained in a few words now.

108. *Crazed.*] Driven to madness, made crazy.

— *Crossed in love.*] Thwarted by the intervention of some obstacle in the path of love.

109. *Missed.*] ‘Observed his absence;’ ‘was at a loss when I looked for him in vain.’

— *Customed.*] More usually ‘accustomed.’ Indeed the verb ‘to custom’ is now quite obsolete.

110. *Heath.*] The upland lawn, v. 100.

— *Favourite tree.*] The nodding beech, v. 101.

111. *Another.*] Morn.

— *Yet.*] Again, as yet, even then=‘jam tum.’

111. *The rill.*] The brook, v. 104. Wedgwood defines a *rill* as ‘a trickling stream,’ and compares the Du. *rillen* and *trill* from *trillen*, to shiver. The onomatopœtic character of the word seems indubitable. Cf. ripple, roll, run; Lat. *rivus*, *rivulus*; Gk. πέω (reō).

113. *Dirges.*] A *dirge* is so called from the first word of one of the psalms in the English burial service, ‘dirige.’ See Scott, ‘L. of L.’ ii. v. 29.

— *Due.*] As prescribed by the ritual. This is a poor line.

114. *Slow.*] Adverbial for slowly.

— *Through.*] One would rather expect ‘along.’

— *Churchway path.*] Scil. the path that is the way to the church. So Shakespeare, ‘Mid. Night’s Dream,’ act v. sc. 1. l. 389, ‘In the church-way paths to glide.’ Some editions have ‘churchyard.’

115. *For thou canst read.*] The *kindred spirit*, being an educated man, could read, whilst the hoary-headed swain, as we may infer from this, could not. With the form, cf. ‘Sam. Ag.’ 709.

116. *Graved.*] Graven is the regular past participle of the verb to grave. Engraved would be used in prose.

— *Thorn.*] The hawthorn, or blackthorn, common trees so called from the number and size of their thorns. See Scott, ‘L. of L.’ i. 215.

117. *The lap of earth.*] As on his mother’s lap. ‘Gremio telluris,’ Virg. ‘Æn.’ iii. 509. Cf. Milton, ‘P. L.’ x. 777-8.

How glad would lay me down  
As in my mother’s *lap*. There I should *rest*.

And xi. 536, iv. 254. Coleridge’s magnificent ‘Hymn to the Earth’ should be studied.

118. This verse has become a common-place quotation.

119. *Fair Science.*] Science is personified as one of the Muses, and so is called *fair*.

— *Frowned not on.*] Was not displeased at, loo’ed favourably at. Cf. the opening lines of Horace’s Ode ‘Quam tu, Me’pomene,’ &c. Carin. iv. iii. 1.

119. *Melancholy.*] See Trench, 'Glossary,' s. v., and 'Study of Words,' p. 126.

120. *Marked him.*] Set her mark upon him to show that he belonged to her. Cf. ii. 27.

121. *Large.*] The Latin *largus* originally meant plentiful, copious, and subsequently prodigal. Chaucer uses *large* where in M. E. *free* or *liberal* would be used.

— *Bounty.*] Fr. *bonté*, Lat. *bonitas*=‘goodness of heart,’ which shows itself in what the hand does. Cf. the history of the word *boon*, as a substantive and adjective. Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 212.

— *Sincere.*] Honest and truthful. Trench, 'Study of Words,' p. 197.

122. *Recompense.*] God repaid him as bountifully; measured to him with the measure with which he meted.

123. *To Misery.*] To the wretched. This explains what his bounty was.

— *Tear.*] For etym. see Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. v. 467, note.

124. *Gained.*] As a *recompense*. *Gain* and *win* are probably the same etymologically.

— *A friend.*] The friend whom Gray gained from Heaven was Mason. It is conceivable, however, that the friend referred to is God himself.

125. *Farther.*] Beyond this point. It is the comparative of *far*. *Further*, which is the comparative of *fore* or *forth*, would mean *more in front*. (Latham.)

— *Disclose.*] Lay open. See note on i. 3.

126. *Fraillies.*] A frailty is a weakness to which *frail beings* are liable.

— *Dread.*] Awful. The use of this word as an adjective grew up long after it had existed as a verb and noun.

127. *Trembling hope.*] The hope is based on the consciousness of the merits, while the equal consciousness of the frailties gives cause for trembling. Gray was thinking of an expression in Petrarch—'paventosa speme.'

128. The stanza inserted here in the old copies will be found in the list of various readings.

*Note.*—Dr. Johnson's opinion of the Elegy is thus characteristically summed up:—‘It abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo.’

## VI.

[The motto—‘*Vocal to the intelligent, but for the many they need interpreters*’—contains at once Gray’s apology for his alleged obscurity and his contempt for those who found his poetry obscure.]

1. *Aëolian lyre.*] A translation of Αἰολῆς μολπή, Αἰολίδες χόρδαι, the names by which Pindar, who is Gray’s model here, designates his own poetry. The critics of the day fell into the trap laid for the unwary, and, identifying the ‘Aëolian lyre’ with the *Aëolian harp*, or *harp of Eolus* (the father of the Winds), rallied the poet on his invocation of an instrument ‘so irregular and uncertain that it must be ill-adapted to the *dance*’ (an allusion to Epode I. 1).

2. *Rapture.*] The Latin equivalent of the Greek *ecstasy*. Like *transport* (the original MS. reading), *rapture* and *ecstasy* both denote a temporary separation of matter and spirit, when the mind is ravished from the grasp of the body by some appeal to the passions, such as music, eloquence, &c. can effect. Cf. Trench, ‘Study of Words,’ p. 199.

3. *Helicon.*] A mountain in Boeotia, in Greece, dedicated to the Muses. On the eastern ascent of this mountain was Aganippe, and farther west was Hippocrene—the *harmonious springs* here referred to. These springs are in the following lines used metaphorically for poetry itself without any explanation.

— *Harmonious.*] Fountains of harmony. Whoever drank of their water was supposed to drink in poetic inspiration. (Cf. the Prologue to the Satires of Persius.) In this stanza, ‘the various sources of poetry, which gives life and lustre to all it touches, are described; its quiet majestic progress enriching every subject (otherwise dry and barren) with a pomp of diction and luxuriant harmony of numbers; and its more rapid and irresistible course when swoln and hurried away by the conflict of tumultuous passions.’ (G.)

4. *Mazy.*] Wedgwood considers that the primary sense of this word maze is subjective, i.e. to bewilder, bewilderment. Others trace it to A.-S. *mäse*, a whirlpool.

5. *Laughing.*] A classical expression. Virgil (E. iv. 20) talks of the ‘laughing acanthus.’

— *That blow.*] Cf. note on IV. 3. *Blow* has three forces and three separate etymological sources in E. The word in this passage is the A.-S. *blövan*, M. H. G. *bluhnen*. Blossom, bloom, blush, are cognates.

6. *As they flow.*] They=the rills. There is a little confusion of subjects and pronouns, but the sense is clear.

7. *Now.*] At one time in its history; as *now* (v. 10) is, *at another period*. With the following lines cf. Horace, ‘Carm.’ iii. 29, 33–41.

9. *Ceres’ golden reign.*] Poetical for ‘fields of ripe corn.’ Cf. the ordinary phrase, ‘vegetable kingdom.’ For *reign*, see note on V. 12.

10. *Amain.*] See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 150, note.
11. *Headlong.*] See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 416, note, and Adams, § 396, 407 (18).
12. *Nodding.*] See note, V. 101. There is in this line considerable adaptation of sound to sense.
13. The subject of antistrophe i. is—'The power of harmony to calm the turbulent sallies of the soul.' (G.) It is closely modelled on the First Pythian of Pindar.
- *Sorereign.*] One of those words that simulate an English form, and mislead one to an erroneous etymology. The more primitive shape is *sovran*, Fr. *souverain*, Lat. *superanus*.
- *Willing.*] Scil. Music does not take the soul captive against its will.
14. *And.*] i.e. of airs sweet and airs solemn-breathing (a characteristic compound, by the way), that is, awe-inspiring.
15. *Shell.*] The first lyre was made by stretching strings on the shell of a tortoise. Hence the application of both *chelys* (Gr.) and *testudo* (Lat.) to the lyre or harp. Cf. the invocation at the opening of Horace, 'Carm.' iii. 11.
16. *Frantic.*] *Fury-passions*, III. 61. To hear is to obey, in the case of a sovereign and subjects.
17. *Thracia's hills.*] Thrace was the peculiar domain of Mavors or Mars. See Virgil, 'A.' iii. 13, 35; 'G.' iv. 461. The hills were Mounts Pangaeus and Rhodope on the west and Mount Haemus on the north.
19. *Thirsty.*] Blood-thirsty. Cf. the invocation to Mars, Ovid, 'Fasti,' III. i. 2—
- Belice, depositis clipeo paulisper et hastâ,  
Mars, ades.
- 20-24. 'A weak imitation of some incomparable lines in the First Pythian of Pindar.' (G.)
20. *Perching.*] In agreement with feathered king. The verb to perch is later than the noun, which is from Fr. *perche*, Lat. *pertica*. *Pearch* is occasionally found, and 'perk' is probably another form.
21. *Feathered king.*] Pindar says, ἀρχὸς οἰωνῶν (arkhos olōnōn), *king of birds*; and Gray's expression amounts to much the same thing.
22. *Ruffled.*] An attempt to reproduce Pindar's thought, ὑγρὸν νῶτον αἰωπεῖ (hugron nōton aiōrei), 'he raises aloft his soft moist back.'
23. *Quenched.*] By a kind of zeugma, this does duty for the terror of his beak as well as for the lightnings of his eye, to which it properly belongs. Pindar says, 'Thou didst pour over his beaked head a black-faced cloud.' For etymology, see Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 411.
24. *Lightnings.*] Not in Pindar, but suggested by a line preceding those here imitated.

25. Epode I.: 'Power of harmony to produce all the graces of motion in the body.' (G.)

— *Thee.*] The shell, v. 15.

— *Obey.*] Pindar says, 'The dance listens to the lyre, and singers obey it in their motions.'

26. *Tempered.*] Attempered to, regulated by. The Latin *temporo* is, *to mix in due proportion*, from *tempus*, a portion or division of time (root *tem*, in Gk. *temno*, to cut). This verb appears in A.-S. as *temprian*.

— *Warbled.*] O. E. *werbelle*; O. Fr. *werbler*, akin to *whirl*; but see Ogilvie. It is more commonly used of modulations of the voice. The word is a favourite of Gray's.

27. *Idalia.*] Venus, queen of Cyprus. See Virgil, 'Æn.' x. 86—

Est Paphos Idaliumque tibi, sunt alta Cythera.

Paphos and Idalium were both in Cyprus.

— *Velvet.*] Adjectival. Dr. Johnson calls it a cant expression. Nature, he thinks, should not borrow from art, though art may and ought to borrow from nature. But, in answer to this objection, it may be said that the image which best conveys the impression intended is the best that can be used, whether borrowed from art or nature. Cf. *the velvet of her paws*, IV. 9.

28. *Rosy-crowned.*] Garlanded or crowned with roses. See I. 1, note.

— *Loves.*] Cupids, Amores. See Ov. 'Met.' x. 516.

29. *Cytherēa.*] Venus, so called from Cythera, the promontory, one of her favourite haunts. See note on *Idalia*, v. 27.

30. *Sport.*] *Sports* is the reading of most modern editions, and perhaps is more in harmony with the plural *Pleasures*. Cf. Milton, 'L'Allegro,' 25-34.

— *Antic.*] For the process by which *antic* has now become synonymous with *grotesque*, see Wedgwood. It is from Lat. *anticus*, ante, before, and was applied, at the revival of art, first to the remains of ancient sculpture, then to the monstrosities of mediæval carvers, and so, more vaguely, to any odd, extravagant, ridiculous shape of dress or gesture. It is now more commonly a noun of the thing, and it has been used as a noun of the person. (Trench, 'Gloss.' s. v.) Cf. Shaks. 'Macbeth,' act iv. sc. i. l. 29—

I'll charm the air to give a sound,  
While you perform your *antic* round.

— *Blue-eyed.*] *Glaukōpis*, gray-eyed. *Pleasures* are, of course, personified.

31. *Frisking.*] Fr. *frisque*, Ger. *frisch*. The same word as *fresh*. Notice the group, Fret, fry, frill, flit, flick, fribble, fritter, &c.

— *Frolic measures.*] See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 413; also i. 353, 652; ii. 392.

33. *Circling.*] A.-S. *circol*, Fr. *cercle*, both from Lat. *circulus*. In many other cases the Lat. diminutive has given rise to the simple noun. See Corn. Lewis, 'Rom. Lang.' pp. 132, 137.

34. *Brisk.*] Fr. *brusque*; cf. *frisk*, v. 31.

— *In cadence beating.*] Their *feet beating time on the ground in cadence*. Cadence is the term for a definite arrangement of metrical feet. See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 651.

35. Imitation of Homer, 'Od.' viii. 265: 'But Odysseus gazed on the flashing of the feet, and he marvelled in his mind.' μαρμαρυγή, *marmarugē*—Homer's word—means a broken sparkle or flash of light, such as the surface of granite, for instance, emits.

36. Observe the number of long syllables in this line. See Critical Introduction, p. xxvii.

37. *Graces.*] The *Charites* were three—Aglāin, Euphrosyne, Thalia (Hesiod, 'Th.' 907). In Homer (Od. viii. 364) the Graces are the personal attendants of Aphrodite, or Venus, who bathe, anoint, and dress their laughter-loving queen.

38. *Sublime.*] Uplifted, raised aloft. *Sublimis* is said to be from *sublevo*, as if it were a contraction of *sublevimis*.

39. *Wins her easy way.*] Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 78; Milton, 'P. L.' ii. 1015–16—

On all sides round  
Environed, wins his way.

For the majestic gait which marks a goddess, cf. Virg. 'A.' i. 46, 405; and Shaksp. 'Tempest,' act iv. sc. i. l. 101—

Highest queen of state,  
Great Juno comes, I know her by her gait.

40. *Warm.*] Flushed with health and pleasure.

— *Rising.*] Heaving, that is, rising and falling; or perhaps merely of the form—round, swelling.

41. An imitation of Phrynicus—

Δάμπει δ' ἐπὶ πορφυρέησι  
παρείησι φῶς ἔρωτος. (G.)

('And gleams the light of love upon her purple cheeks.')

Cf. Virg. 'A.' i. 590; Ovid, 'Amor.' ii. i. 38.

42. Strophe ii.: 'To compensate the real and imaginary ills of life, the Muse was given to mankind, by the same Providence that sends the day to dispel by its presence the gloom and terrors of the night.' (G.)

— *Feeble race.*] Like Homer's δειλοῖσι βρότοισιν and Virgil's 'miseris mortalibus.' Notice the inversion. Feeble, M. Fr. faible, O. Fr. feble, fible, fieble, floibe; It. fiebole; Lat. fribilis, lamentable. But Wedgwood rejects this derivation.

43. *Penury.*] See note on V. 51.

43. *Racks.*] The *rack* (A.-S. ræcan, to stretch) is an instrument of torture on which the limbs are stretched, and the joints pulled or wrenched. See III. 85; here it is used in an extended sense, for torments generally.

44. *Weeping train.*] See note on I. 2; III. 57.

46. *Fond.*] Perhaps a past participle of O. E. verb to *fonne*, but to *fond* exists also; and so does a noun or adjective, *fon*, *fonne*. For affinities in Scandinavian and Celtic tongues, see Ogilvie, and cf. Lat. *vanus*. The meanings range from 'loving' in a good sense to 'loving' not wisely but too well; and then, all notion of love being dropt, it signifies simply vain, idle, foolish, self-deceiving.

— *Disprove.*] Imperative. The poet invokes his Muse to prove the falsity of the implied blame.

47. Cf. Milton, 'P. L.' i. 26: 'And justify the ways of God to men.'

49. *Sickly.*] (1) Unhealthy, (2) unwholesome. Here it bears of course the latter meaning.

— *Dews.*] For etymology see Ogilvie. Here the word is no doubt intended to comprise not only 'dew' proper, but all the noxious vapours of evening.

50. *Spectres.*] A spectre is an apparition or unsubstantial vision; Lat. *spectrum*, from *specto* (root, *spec* or *spic*), Fr. *spectre*. Richardson has no instance earlier than Milton.

— *Birds of boding cry.*] Lat. *obscoenæ volucres*, birds whose note is taken as an omen. See Virgil, 'A.' iii. 241.

51. *He gives.*] 'He (Jove) permits or grants'—*spectres* and *birds* being in the dative. It is possible however to take these words as accusatives, and *to range* as a gerundial infinitive.

— *To range.*] To roam at will.

52. Par. 'Until they see in the far East the tokens of the sun's approach.' Cf. Cowley, 'Brutus,' 4—

Or seen her [the morning's] well-appointed star  
Come marching up the eastern hills afar.

53. *Hyperion.*] This is more properly *Hyperion*. In Homer it recurs frequently as the epithet of *Helios*, the sun. Liddell and Scott think it is a contraction of 'Ὑπεριόνιος (Hyperionîon) = the son of Hyperion. Another derivation, which resolves it into ὑπὲρ ἵων = marching on high, allows the ο to be short.

— *Glittering shafts.*] Lucretius (i. 148) talks of 'lucida tela diei.' A.-S. *sceaft* = arrow.

— *Of war.*] Because the day is hostile to the shades and vapours of the night.

— Antistrophe ii.: 'The influence of poetic genius over the remotest and most uncivilised nations; its connection with liberty, and the virtues naturally attending it.' (G.)

54. *Beyond the solar road.*] 'Extra anni solisque vias,' Virg. 'A.' vi. 796. (G.) By the solar road is meant the Zodiac, which Aratus calls

ἥλιοτο κέλευθος (ēlioio keleuthos), 'the pathway of the sun.' These *climes*, therefore, are the regions about either pole.

55. *Shaggy.*] Clad in furs and skins, as well as overgrown with hair.

— *Ice-built mountains.*] Icebergs (a modern word), mountains built of ice.

56. *Twilight.*] Adjectival, 'between two lights or in a half-light.' It expresses the neutral atmospheric condition between actual night and actual daylight. Cf. Milton, 'Hymn Nativ.' 188—

The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.'

57. *To cheer.*] The gerundial infinitive—in order to cheer, with the hope of cheering. Cf. v. 87; and Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 153.

58. *Odorous.*] Fragrant, sweet-smelling. The tropics as well as the Arctic solitudes are cheered by the Muse.

59. Chili (see map of South America), originally a colony of Spain, asserted its independence early in the present century (1810), and is now a Republic with a President, a Senate, and a Chamber of Deputies.

— *Laid.*] Must be in agreement with *youth*; cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 445; ii. 251.

60. *Deigns.*] Condescends, does not disdain.

— *Savage youth.*] The uncivilised aborigines or natives. *Youth* is used collectively, like Lat. *juventus*.

— *Repeat.*] Celebrate in song. Similarly we talk (in poetry) of singing a person.

61. *In loose numbers.*] 'Numeris lege solutis,' in verses not to be tried by strict metrical rules.

— *Wildly sweet.*] Such sweetness as they have is their own, has not been learned by training, is not the product of art. On *wild* see Treuch. Cf. Milton, 'L'Allegro,' 133—4—

Or sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy's child,  
Warble his native wood notes wild.

62. *Feather-cinctured.*] Wearing a girdle (cincture) adorned with feathers. Cf. Milton, 'P. L.' ix. 1115-1117—

Such of late

Columbus found the American, so girt  
With feathered cincture.

— *Dusky loves.*] Their dark brides or affianced lovers. *Dusky* is the adjective of *dusk*; which, though in many cases almost synonymous with *twilight*, is, like the Latin adjective *fusca*, *subfuscus*, applied to the complexion of the inhabitants of the torrid zone.

63. *Track.*] Object of *pursue*, v. 64.

64. *Pursue.*] This use of the plural verb after the former of two nouns is in the manner of Pindar. Grammatically, the verb agrees with all four nouns. The exact case is not noticed in ordinary grammars; Adams, § 593; Angus, 'H. E. T.' § 509.

64. *Generous*.] The shame that indicates nobility of soul, and leads men to follow great examples as opposed to the shame felt for evil deeds. Cf. II. 45; and Eurip. 'Alcestis,' 600: *τὸ γὰρ εὐγενὲς ἐκφέρεται πρὸς αἰδῶ* (True nobility is instinctively prompted to the feeling of shame).

65. *Unconquerable mind.*] 'Mens nescia vinci,' the spirit which nothing can subdue—like the 'atrox animus' of Cato.

66. Epode ii.: 'Progress of Poetry from Greece to Italy, and from Italy to England. Chaucer knew something of Dante and Petrarch. Surrey and Wyatt had formed their taste in Italy. Spenser imitated, and Milton improved upon, the Italian writers. But this school was, soon after the Restoration, supplanted by a new school on the French model, which has subsisted ever since.' (G.)

66. *Delphi's sleep.*] Cf. Milton, 'Hymn Nativ.' 178: 'With hollow shriek the sleep of Delphos leaving.' Delphi was a town in Phocis, below Mount Parnassus, where was a famous shrine of Apollo. For a graphic narrative of the Persians' attack on it, see Herod. viii. 35-38.

67. *Crown.*] Lat. *corōna*, *corōnare*, Fr. *couronne*, O. E. *coroune* (cf. crowner = coroner). To *crown* is to encompass or surround the top of anything, but it is widely extended in use. Thus the numerous clusters of islands which stud the surface of the Ægean Sea may be said to form its crown. Cf. III. 2.

— *Ægean.*] The modern name 'Archipelago' is said to be a corruption either of *Hagio Pelago* (Holy Sea), or of *Egio Pelago*, which latter is obviously a corruption of *Ægeum pelagus*. If the former account be true, the title is probably due to the sanctity of the monasteries on Mount Athos.

68. *Cool Ilissus.*] Seneca (Hippol. i. 13) talks of '*par glacie lenis Ilissus.*' The Ilissus (cf. Milton, 'P. R.' iv. 249) flowed to the southwest of the Acropolis of Athens.

69. *Mæander.*] Minder; it flowed from Celænæ, in Phrygia, through Caria into the Icarian Sea at Miletus, and from its winding course and the accidental resemblance of Lat. *meare*, to flow, the proper name has become generalised into a verb.

— *Amber waves.*] Cf. Milton, 'P. L.' iii. 358-9—

And where the river of bliss through midst of Heaven  
Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her *amber* stream.

Cf. 'P. R.' iii. 288. The Lat. *electrum* is used in the same way; Cf. Virg. 'G.' iii. 521-2—

*Non qui per saxa volutas*  
*Purior electro campum petit amnis.*

And also 'A.' viii. 402, 624. Used because of the colour of the water, in Latin *flavus Tiberis*, of the mountain torrent, as in Greek.

70. *Lingering labyrinths.*] Cf. above, v. 4; and Virg. 'G.' iii. 14—

*Propter aquam tardis ingens ubi flexibus errat*  
*Mincius.*

The expressions are appropriately used of a stream, the name of which has become a synonym for winding tortuous progress. For 'Labyrinthus' see Virg. 'A.' v. 588. Notice the alliteration and the imitative character of the two verses.

71. *Tuneful echoes.*] The echoes which of old used to follow the song and the lyre. Observe that Echo is not a sound here, but only a power of sounding.

72. *Mute, but, &c.*] To every sound but (save) that of anguish, the echoes are mute. In other words, no voice is heard but the wail of the oppressed.

73. *Poetic mountain.*] The mountains of Greece and of Greek Asia, so much celebrated in poetry and surrounded by poetical associations.

74. *Shade.*] Grove. An instance of synecdoche.

— *Hallowed.*] Consecrated to some deity. The -w- represents, as so often, the A.-S. -g- in halgian; O. E. halwe, M. E. hallow, connected with holy.

76. *Deep.*] Adverb.

77. *The sad Nine.*] The Nine Muses, the goddesses of the arts, sad at leaving their old haunts and at the fall of Greece.

— *Eril hour.*] Hour (time) of degradation under the Roman yoke.

78. *Parnassus.*] A mount to the north of Delphi. See note on v. 66.

— *Latian plain.*] The plain of Latium, in Italy, is the plain of the River Tiber. Latium is, for the most part, a level country, the only hills being in the north-western extremity.

79. *Alike they scorn.*] An inverted construction. In prose the sentence would run: *They scorn the pomp of tyrant Power* (i.e. Rome in the days of imperial luxury and magnificence) *as much as they scorned coward Vice that revels in her chains* (i.e. Greece not only fallen from virtue but so degraded as to sit down contented with servitude). Cf. xii. 5. Alike Richardson quotes 'o liche' from Robert of Brunne, and from this we may conclude perhaps that 'a,' as in so many compounds, represents 'on.' The dictionaries give A.-S. gelic.

82. *Albion.*] This name is first found applied to the British Islands in the geographical work of Ptolemy of Pelusium, A.D. 160. It is, perhaps, to be traced to the white (Lat. *albus*) cliffs of the English south coast as seen from the direction of Gaul.

— *Sea-encircled.*] More commonly 'sea-girt.'

— *Strophe iii.*

83. *Far from the sun.*] Far north, that is, of the lands warmed by the sun.

84. *Thy.*] Albion is the subject of the invocation. With *green lap* cf., Milton, 'Song on May Morning,' 3—

The flowery May who from her *green lap* throws, &c.

84. *Nature's darling.*] Shakspeare, who is called by Milton (*L'Allegro*, 133) 'Fancy's child.'

85. *What time.*] *Quo tempore*, at the time when—a poetical phrase.

— *Strayed.*] See the quotation from Virgil on v. 70.

86. *Mighty mother.*] Δημήτηρ (Dêmêtér) = Cybele, the goddess of earth, and of external nature. *Mighty*, like *magnus*, is a perpetual epithet of deity. With the language cf. the opening lines of Pope's 'Dunciad.'

— *Unveil.*] The face which to ordinary mortals is seen only through a veil.

87. *Dauntless.*] See note on V. 57.

88. Cf. Sir John Sandys—

*The child*

*Stretched forth his little arms and on him smiled.*

Ovid, 'Met.' iv. 515.

Deque sinu matris ridentem et parva Learchum  
Brachia tendentem rapit.

And also Virg. 'E.' iv. 60.

89. *Pencil.*] Fr. pinceau (cf. ciseau, chisel; manteau, mantle, &c.). The Lat. pénicillum, and pénicillus, or péniculus, a dim. of pénis, a tail (pendeo, to hang), was applied to the painter's brush, and to the *pencil* proper.

— *Clear.*] The contrary of *dull*.

90. *Richly.*] *Richness* in painting is synonymous with fulness and completeness, as *poverty* is synonymous with incompleteness and inadequacy. Cf. IV. 17.

— *The vernal year.*] The year in spring-time. Probably it is a Latinism for *spring*, used like '*pomifer annus*' (fruit-bearing year) for autumn, and '*hibernus annus*' for winter.

91. *Thine too.*] The construction is changed, but the verb is omitted, the sentence being interjectional in character.

— *Golden keys.*] Gold being the most precious of metals, *golden*, like Gk. χρύσεος (chruseos), and Lat. aureus, is applied to all that is pre-eminently excellent. Thus the age when the human race was young and unlearned in evil is known as the 'Golden Age.' So also of particular eras in literature, &c. Cf. Milton, 'Comus,' 12-14.

Yet some there be that by due steps aspire  
To lay their just hands on that *golden key*  
That *opes* the palace of Eternity.

92. *Gates of Joy.*] Cf. the *gates of Mercy*, V. 68.

93. *Of Horror that.*] *That* (key) can unlock the *gates of Horror and Thrilling Fears*.

93. *Thrilling fears.*] Cf. the close of Collins' 'Ode to Fear;—

O thou whose spirit most possest  
*The sacred seat of Shakspeare's breast!*  
 Teach me but once like him to feel:  
 His cypress-wreath my meet decree,  
 And I, O Fear, will dwell with thee.

94. *Sympathetic tears.*] Tears which flow from pity or fellow-feeling, spring from a *sacred source*.

— Antistrophe iii.

95. *Nor second.*] Nor is he second (to Shakspeare), but his equal. Coleridge (Biog. Lit. ch. xv.) finely speaks of Shakspeare as 'seated on one of the two glory-smitten summits of the poetic mountain with Milton as his compeer, not rival.'

— *Sublime.*] See note on v. 38. Cf. Milton, 'P. L.' vi. 771—  
*He on the wings of Cherub rode sublime.*

96. *Seraph-wings.*] Ecstasy is personified as a *Seraph*, a class of beings supposed by Hebrew mystics to inhabit Heaven, and occasionally spoken of in a vague sense by Christian divines. Cf. the opening lines of Milton, 'P. L.' vii.

97. *Abyss.*] ἄβυσσος (abyssus) = unfathomed, bottomless. Applied in theological language to Hell, or one of the worlds beyond the grave.

— *Spy.*] Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 373, note.

98. Imitation from Lucretius. (G.) See Luc. i. 79—

Ergo vivida vis animi pervicit, et extra  
 Processit longe flammantia incensia mundi.  
 ('So living force of soul prevailed, and far beyond  
 The flaming limits of the world he passed.')

Cf. also Pope's 'Ode on St. Cecilia's Day,' v. 48—

Where through all the infernal bounds  
 That flaming Phlegethon surrounds.

99. Gray acknowledges that a passage in the book of the Prophet Ezekiel was before him when he wrote this. See Holy Bible, Ezek. i. 20, 26, 28. See also Milton, 'P. L.' vi. 757-8 (an imitation of the same passage)—

Over their heads a crystal firmament  
 Where on a sapphire throne, &c.

— *Sapphire.*] Gr. σάπφειρος (sappheiros)=lapis lazuli, according to some authorities; though the precious stone now signified by the name is of a transparent blue colour, and is chemically closely allied to the ruby, being pure crystallised alumina. The word is said to be Semitic. Cf. Hebrew *shaphir* = fair, from ob. *shaphar* = to shine, Arab *safir*, &c.

100. *Angels.*] And if angels cannot, much less can mortals gaze without trembling.

101. *Blasted.*] To *blast* is to injure as with a deadly wind, A.-S. *blæst*, *blæsan*, to blow. Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 667.

102. Cf. Hom. 'Odyss.' viii. 62-64.

Then came the herald nigh, leading the much-loved minstrel,  
Whom the Muse loved dearly, but gave him both good and ill :  
For she robbed him of his eyes, but gave him sweet minstrelsy.

— *Closed his eyes.*] Cf. Virg. 'A.' x. 746—

In aeternam clauduntur lumina noctem.

In Bayle's Dictionary, s. v. 'Achilles,' there is mention made of a tradition that Homer, when keeping sheep near the tomb of Achilles, prayed to Heaven for a sight of the hero, and, his prayer being granted, he was blasted by the excessive radiance which surrounded Achilles, and was for ever blind. It seems certain that Gray was ignorant of this tradition, for if he had known it he would have brought it forward in apology for his own poetical deviation from historical accuracy in the case of Milton. For Milton's own account of his blindness, see in particular the 14th and 17th sonnets.

103. *Dryden.*] The change from allusion to direct mention by name is significant.

— *Less presumptuous.*] Than Milton. No poet since Milton has had courage to overleap the 'bounds of place and time' with the splendid daring of Milton.

— *Car.*] Governed by the verb *bear*. Notice the inversion.

104. *Wide.*] Far and wide; adverbial.

105. 'This and the next line are meant to express the stately march and sounding energy of Dryden's rhymes.' (G.) By the *two coursers* are meant the two lines of the heroic or ten-syllable couplet. See Crit. Introd. p. xxii. Cf. Virgil, 'A.' vii. 280-1—

Absenti Æneæ currum geminosque jugales  
Semine ab ætherio, spirantes naribus ignem.  
(‘For the absent Æneas a car and twin coursers  
Of ethereal seed, breathing flame from their nostrils.’)

106. Imitation of the Holy Bible, Book of Job xxxix. 19. (G.) 'Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder ?'

— *Long-resounding pace.*] Far resounding tread. *Pace* = step, like Latin *passus*, It. *passe*. Notice that -s- not unfrequently becomes -c- ; cf. *pence*, *dice*, &c.

— *Epode iii.*

107. *The lyre.*] It was not as a *lyric* poet that Dryden was pre-eminent, though such productions as 'Alexander's Feast' prove conclusively that the highest excellence in that field of poetry was within his reach.

107. *Explore.*] Because it was new and strange to him, or the word may possibly be used as a mere bit of poetic diction, like Lat. *tractare*, &c.

108. Smollett has plagiarised this line in his 'Ode to Mirth,' 35—  
Bright-eyed Fancy hovering near.

109. *Pictured urn.*] Cf. V. 41, though a different kind of urn is there referred to. The notion is perhaps borrowed from one of those common classical pictures in which a nymph is shown scattering gifts from a jar.

110. This line was an imitation of the well-known line in Cowley's 'Prophet,' 'Words that weep, and tears that speak.' Gray's is much less of a conceit than Cowley's.

— *Thoughts that breathe.*] Thoughts inspired with life.

— *Words that burn.*] Words all on fire and glowing with passion.

111. *But ah! &c.*] Lyric poetry did not survive Dryden. The sentence is broken off.

113. *Wakes.*] See V. 48.

114. *Ample pinion.*] Cf. Horace 'Carm.' ii. xx. 1, 2: 'Non tenui pennā.'

115. *The Theban eagle.*] Pindar. See 'Olymp.' ii. 159: Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνθα θεῖον. (G.) Pindar compares himself to an eagle and his enemies to ravens that croak and clamour in vain below while it pursues its flight regardless of their noise. (G.) Horace, in a well-known Ode (iv. ii. 25), calls Pindar 'the swan of Dirce.'

116. *Sailing.*] Like a ship that is undisputed mistress of the sea.

— *Supreme dominion.*] Notice the stately march of this verse.

117. *Deep of air.*] Deep = sea, as the word *sailing* seems to show. Cf. Lucr. v. 276-7—

Semper enim quodcumque fluit de rebus, id omne  
Aeris in magnum fertur mare.

Cf. Shaksp. 'Timon,' act iv. sc. ii. l. 22.

118. *Yet.*] Though not a second Pindar. Cf. with what follows Horace's modest estimate of himself in the Ode quoted on v. 115.

— *Infant eyes.*] On this Dugald Stewart remarks that 'Gray, in describing the infantine reveries of poetical genius, has fixed with exquisite judgment on that class of our conceptions which are derived from visible objects.'

119. *Such forms, &c.*] Scil. such shapes as Fancy draws.

120. *Orient hues, &c.*] Hues of the east, of the dawn, although no material sun-shone upon them.

121. *Mount.*] On wings, v. 95.

— *Distant way.*] A course distant from that of the common herd.

122.] *Vulgar fate.* The common lot or destiny of men.

123. *Beneath the good.*] Is antithetical to *above the great*.

## VII.

[ADVT.—‘This Ode is founded on a tradition current in Wales that Edward I., when he completed the conquest of that country, ordered all the bards that fell into his hands to be put to death.’ (G.)]

Argument taken by Mason from the author's commonplace-book :—

‘The army of Edward I., while marching through a deep valley, are suddenly stopped by the appearance of a venerable figure, seated on the summit of an inaccessible rock, who, with a voice more than human, reproaches the king with all the misery and desolation which he had brought on his country, foretells the misfortunes of the Norman race, and declares that all Edward’s cruelty shall never extinguish the noble ardour of poetic genius in this island, and that men shall never be wanting to celebrate true virtue and valour in immortal strains, to expose vice and infamous pleasure, and boldly to censure tyranny and oppression. His song ended, he precipitates himself from the mountain, and is swallowed up by the river rolling at its foot.’

That this original plan was not fully carried out was due, says Mason, to the unfortunate circumstance that in several important respects the prophecy had not been fulfilled. Spenser (e.g.) did not ‘celebrate virtue and valour,’ nor did Shakspeare profess to ‘expose vice and infamous pleasure;’ Milton’s ‘censures of tyranny and oppression’ were delivered not in poetry, but in prose; Dryden was a court parasite; Pope was a Tory; and Addison was—not a poet. This will account for the deviation in the last epode from the original design—Spenser being praised for his allegory, Shakspeare for his power of moving the passions, and Milton for his epic excellence. In fact, the Ode lay unfinished for two years, and was only then brought to completion by the accident of Gray’s hearing a celebrated performer play on a Welsh harp. Mason adds that a musical composer named Smith, a pupil of Hindel, intended setting the Ode to music as an oratorio. The design, however, was never carried out.

## Strophe i.

1. *Ruin seize thee.*] May ruin seize thee! An execration made more effective by its abruptness. For the imperative, see Angus, ‘H. E. T.’ § 283, note; Adams, § 300. Johnson finds fault with the alliteration in *ruin* and *ruthless*.

— *Ruthless.*] Pitiless. For etymology, see Scott, ‘L. of L.’ ii. 630.

2. *Confusion, &c.*] May rout and defeat attend thy march! Livy, in describing an engagement between the Romans and Samnites, says (ix. 27): ‘Romanus equitatus concitat equos, signaque et ordines pedum atque equitum confundit.’ But *confusion* may here be used with less precision of sense.

3. *Famed.*] Edward I. had been victorious in his Welsh campaigns. Conquest (victory) personified is imaged as flapping her pinions over the

banners. Her wing is crimson with the blood of the vanquished. 'Victoria is always represented as a young female with wings and with a palm-branch or a wreath, or both, in her hand.' (A. T. Macleane, on Horace, 'Epp.' i. xviii. 61.)

4. *Mock the air, &c.]* Imitation of Shakspeare, 'K. John,' act v. sc. i. l. 72—

*Mocking the air with colours idly spread. (G.)*

Cf. also 'Macbeth,' act i. sc. ii. l. 49—

*Where the Norwegian banners flout the sky  
And fan our people cold.*

5. *Helm nor.]* This omission of the former of two disjunctives—*neither—nor*—is common in poetry. Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 126, and *passim*; Angus, 'H. E. T.' § 581.

— *Hauberk.]* A texture of interwoven steel ringlets fitting closely to the body. (G.) Cf. Dryden, 'Pal. and Arcite,' iii. 1879: '*Hauberks* and *helms* are hewed with many a wound.' The word, though Teutonic in origin (A. S. *hals, neck*; *beorgan, to protect*), probably comes to us through O. Fr. *hauberc*. *Haubergeon* is a diminutive form.

6. *Thy virtues.]* Edward I. had many virtues, and indeed, like his contemporary, St. Louis of France, seems to have been a type of the finest character which the Middle Ages could produce. Perhaps in freedom from mediæval bigotry, he showed some superiority over his compeer. He has been called 'the model of a politic and warlike king.'

— *Tyrant.]* The Greek word *tyrannos*, *túparros*, or *koípavos*, *koirānos* (Doric), originally meant an absolute master, one with no superior. Historically, it denoted one who *gained*, rather than one who exercised, his power unlawfully. Thus Peisistratus, though a beneficent and enlightened ruler, was (etymologically) a *tyrant*.

7. *Secret soul.]* That is, conscience—known to none save its possessor. The fears shall be felt, if not betrayed by outward signs.

8. *Cambria.]* The Roman name for Wales, the country of the Kymry, a branch of the Keltic stock. In mythological story it is referred to Camber, son of the imaginary Brutus, King of England.

9. *Crested pride.]* Imitated from Dryden's 'Indian Queen'—'The crested adder's pride.' (G.)

10. *Wild dismay.]* For etymol. see Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 647, note.

11. *Snowdon.]* This was the Saxon name for the mountainous tract called by the natives *Craigian-eryri* (Crags of Eagles), including the highlands of Caernarvon and Merioneth as far east as the River Conway. (G.)

— *Shaggy.]* Woody, overgrown (cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 246) with furze. Cf. the use of the Latin *asper*.

12. *Wound.]* Pret. of *to wind*, on which see note, V. 2; Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 500. The word is appropriately used here of the descent of

a long file of men down a zig-zag mountain path. It is more commonly found absolutely, or with such a noun as 'way,' 'course.'

12. *Toilsome.*] Laborious. On the termination *-some*, A.-S. *-sam*, M. H. G. *-sam*, see Trench, 'Eng. Past and Pres.' p. 142.

13. *Stout.*] Of heart, bold. Cf. Shaks. 'King John,' act iv. sc. ii. l. 171 :

O let me have no subject enemies,  
When adverse foreigners affright my towns  
With dreadful pomp of stout invasion!

— *Glo'ster.*] Gilbert de Clare, surnamed the Red, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, Edward's son-in-law. (G.)

— *Aghast.*] O. E. *agaste*; Goth. *usgaisjaw*, *to frighten*. A = Goth. *us-*; M. H. G. *er-* (Morris, 'Spec. Early E.' p. 413). Wedgwood and Richardson both connect the word with gaze, as they also do *ghastly*, *ghost*, &c. This seems more than doubtful.

— *Trance.*] Fr. *transe*; Lat. *transire*, *to go over*. The transition from life to death being signified. Cf. *dance*, Fr. *danse*, and VI. 106, note.

14. *Mortimer.*] Edmond de Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore. Like the Earl of Glo'ster, he was a Lord-Marcher (see Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 497), living on the border of Wales, and probably accompanied the king on this expedition. (G.)

15. *Couched.*] See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 438.

— *Quivering.*] Cf. 'hastamque trementem,' Virg. 'A.' ii. 175; Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 715.

— *Antistrophe* i.

16. *Haughty brow.*] *Supercilium* is similarly used in Latin poetry, e.g. Virg. 'G.' i. 108.

17. *Frowns.*] The contraction of the eyebrows is equivalent to a menace or threat. Hence a projecting crag which threatens the underlying valley with destruction may be said to *frown over* it. Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 694. For the uses of *minari* in Latin, see Conington on A. i. 162.

— *Old Conway.*] The river which divides the counties of Denbigh and Carnarvon is meant, not the town of the same name. On the epithet *old*, see note on III. 9.

— *Robed, &c.*] Clad in the black which (among Europeans) is symbolical of mourning. Cf. Juv. 'Sat.' x. 245 : 'Perpetuo mœrore et nigrâ veste senescant.' Cf. III. 17.

18. *Haggard.*] Literally means, wild as the eyes of a falcon which has not been tamed, but this primitive sense is forgotten now. 'If taken after Lent, she is properly called a *haggard*, and when she hath preyed a year for herself, and hath mewed most of her feathers, she is called an *intermeasured haggard*.' (Article on Falconry in an old encyclopædia.) Cf. Shaksp. 'Much Ado,' act iii. sc. i. l. 46. *Haggard* is formed of O. E.

hawk, hawk, an 19); but some  
make the first element to be A.-S. *haga*; E. *haw*, field.

19. The image of these two lines was borrowed from a picture by Rafaelle, representing the Supreme Being in the vision of Ezekiel. (G.) See 'Holy Bible,' Ezek. i. 26, x. 1, &c.

— *Lo. se.]* Adverb.

20. Cf. Milton, 'P L.' i. 537: 'Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind.' Cf. Spenser—

*All as a blazing star doth far out-cast  
His hairy beams and flaming locks disperst.*

'Stella comans' ('hairy star') is Ovid's expression for a meteor, or *comet* (*cometes* and *cometa*; Gk. *κομήτης*).

Cælo cœu sœpe refixa  
Transcurrunt crinemque volantia sidera ducunt.  
VIRG. 'Æn.' v. 526.

— *Meteor.*] From the Gr. *μετέωρος* (*mētēōros*), suspended in mid-air. *τὰ μετέωρα πράγματα* (*ta mētēōra pragmata*) is used by Aristophanes for astrological phenomena. The name is applied to those luminous appearances in the sky which are sometimes accompanied by the fall of metallic bodies, and the laws of which science has not yet ascertained.

21. *A master's hand.]* The hand of a master, of one, that is, whose touch the lyre obeyed. In the same way, we say master-piece, master-stroke, &c. Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 132, note.

— *Prophets' fire.]* The ardour of divine frenzy which belongs to prophetic inspiration.

22. Scil. struck the chords of his lyre, and woke the deep notes expressive of sorrow or woe.

23. *Hark.]* Hearken. Cf. Audin' for Audisne? in the Latin poets.

— *Giant oak.]* Seen beside the dwarf growth of common trees, the full-grown oak is gigantic.

— *Desert cave.]* Uninhabited or deserted. Similarly we have saint, sainted; cf. V. 56; and Milton, 'Lycidas,' 39.

24. *Sighs (in answer) to the awful (awe-inspiring) voice (roar) of the torrent* (old Conway's foaming flood; v. 17) *beneath (the rock)*. The tendency in our language to throw out the 'e' in a compound word like *awful* is remarkable. At the present time in several words like *unmistakeable*, &c. the 'e' is struggling for existence.

25. *Hundred arms.]* Perhaps the poet is carrying on the metaphor commenced by 'giant' in v. 23. *Their* applies only to *oak*; *cave* is forgotten.

26. *Hoarser murmurs.]* Hoarser than usual. See note on I. 21. *Hoarse* is probably onomatopoetic. Cf. Lat. *raucus*.

26. *Breathe.*] This is spelled *breath* by Gray to rhyme with *beneath*, v. 24.

27. *Vocal.*] Endued with sound, or re-echoing with the lay; responsive to it. It is often used vaguely as the adjective of 'voice.' A *vocalist* is one who knows the use of his voice.

— *Fatal day.*] Day of doom or destruction, the day on which *Cambria's* fate was decided.

28. *High-born Hoel.*] Hoel was the son of Owen (Gwynedd), Prince of North Wales, and brother of David and Madoc. See Southey's 'Madoc in Wales,' pts. ii. and iii.; and Gray's 'Death of Hoel,' x. A translation of his extant poems will be found in a note to Southey's 'Madoc,' pt. xiv.

— *Soft Llewellyn.*] In song Ll. was 'a tender-hearted prince,' 'Ll. the mild,' but in battle we are told that 'he burnt like an outrageous fire.' He was the ally of Simon de Montfort in Henry III.'s reign, and was naturally the detested enemy of Edward I. He was killed in 1282, and his head was sent to London, and exposed at the Tower.

— *Epode i.*

29. *Cadwallo.*] See Southey's 'Madoc in Wales.' No remains of Cadwallo or Urien are now extant. (G.)

30. *That.*] Which once, when *warm* with life, could hush the sea; ἐκοίμασε στένοντα πόντον. Cf. Shaks. 'M. N. D.' act. ii. sc. i. l. 150—

I heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back  
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath  
That the rude sea grew civil at her song.

31. *Urien.*] He did not survive the year 579. (Henry Morley.)

32. Cf. Milton, 'Lycidas,' 39-41. 'Thee the woods,' &c.

33. *Modred.*] The Saxon form of Myrddin ab Morvryn.

34. *Huge Plinlimmon.*] See Wordsworth, 'Eccl. Sketches,' x. 12: 'Bards nursed on *blue Plinlimmon's* still abode.' It is on the borders of Cardigan and Glamorganshires.

— *Cloud-topt.*] Topped, or capped, with clouds. Cf. Shaks. 'Tempest,' act iv. sc. i. l. 152.

35. *Arron's shore.*] The shores of Caernarvonshire opposite to the Isle of Anglesey. (G.)

36. 'Smeared with gore, a ghastly stream.' (Percy's 'Reliques,' iii. 164.) *Gore* does not seem primarily to have meant blood, but rather thick solid filth. The adjective 'gory' became applied to blood, and by association the word itself grew to signify clotted blood.

37. *Far aloof.*] Cf. the following lines from Statius, 'Thebais,' i. 624—

Illam et nocturno stridore volantes  
Impastæ fngistis aves, rabidamque earum vim  
Oraque sicca ferunt trepidorum inhiasse luporum.

For etymology of *aloof*, see Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 480.

37. *Ravens.*] A.-S. hræfen, Dan. ravn, O. H. G. hraban, Sans. kârava, Lat. corvus; probably originating in imitation. Räven, rävenous are probably identical with rapine, from Lat. rapere.

— *Sail.*] See note on VI. 116.

38. *Famished eagle.*] According to Camden and others, eagles built their aërie yearly among the rocks of Snowdon. Hence, possibly, comes its Welsh name. (See note, v. 11.) At this day it is said that the highest part of Snowdon is called *the eagle's nest*. But the eagle is no stranger to our island, as the Scotch and the natives of Cumberland and Westmoreland, &c. can testify. (G.)

— *Screams.*] See note on II. 39.

39. *Tuneful.*] ‘His *tuneful* brethren all were dead.’ (Scott’s ‘Lay,’ Introd. v. 10.)

40. Imitation of Shaks. ‘Julius Cæsar,’ act ii. sc. ii. 1. 288—

As dear to me as are *the ruddy drops*  
That visit my sad heart.

Cf. ‘King Lear,’ act i. sc. i. 56—

Sire, I love you . . . . .  
Dearer than eyesight.

and Virg. ‘A.’ iv. 31—

Anna refert: *O luce magis dilecta sorori.*

41. *Ruddy.*] See VIII. 21.

42. Cf. Pope’s ‘Prologue to Cato,’ 22, for a similar rhetorical image: ‘And greatly falling, with a falling state.’ Notice the aposiopesis, or abrupt conclusion of the clause. Cf. Virg. ‘A.’ i. 135.

43. No longer (will) I weep; (for) they do not sleep (in death). See v. 31.

44. There is a very similar passage in Statius, ‘Thebais,’ xi. 42—

Montibus insidunt patriis tristique coronâ  
Insecere diem.

— *Grisly.*] See note on III. 82.

45. *Linger yet.*] They still linger, loth to depart. *Linger* is etymologically connected with *long*.

46. *Avengers of.*] This is equivalent to ‘bent on avenging.’ For etymology, see Scott, ‘L. of L.’ i. 125.

47. Cf. the Norse Ode, ‘The Fatal Sisters’ (viii.). (G.)

48. *Tissue.*] Fr. tissu, Lat. texere; cf. issue, Lat. exire. The web (warp and woof) of destiny in which the fortunes of thy line (i.e. thy lineal posterity) are involved. The idea is borrowed from Scandinavian mythology, though it looks as if it came, to some extent, from classical sources. It is one of those ideas common to all poetic thought at a certain social stage. Dr. Johnson questions the propriety of making dead bards into weavers.

48. Strophe ii.

49. *Warp.*] Dr. Johnson remarks that 'It is by crossing the *woof* with the *warp* that men weave the *web* or piece.' He is mistaken. It is the *warp* that is extended in the loom and crossed by the *woof*.

50. *Winding-sheet.*] The shroud is the sheet in which the corpse is wound.

51. The worst line in the poem, according to Dr. Johnson. It recalls some lines in Dryden's 'Sebastian,' act i. sc. i.—

I have a soul that, like an ample shield,  
Can take in all, and *verge* enough for more.

On *verge*, see IV. 29.

52. *Characters of hell.*] A character (Gk. *χαρακτήρ*, *χαράσσειν*) is a stamped impression made upon some durable material. It is then used of figures or symbols of sound, originally graven or stamped in stone or metal.

— *Of hell.*] Because they foretell, and in some degree bring about, deeds of sin to be punished by eternal damnation. *Hell* means the covered or hidden place. A.-S. *hēlan*, to cover; whence comes helm, helmet. See Morris, 'Spec. Early Eng.' p. 379.

53. *Mark.*] Take note of, observe. Here begins the prophecy proper.

54. *Severn.*] The river that, flowing between Wales and England, turns westward, and empties itself into the Irish Sea.

55. The collocation of consonants in this line is remarkable.

— *Berkley's roof.*] Edward II. was cruelly butchered in Berkley Castle, near Bristol. (G.) A.D. 1327.

56. *Agonising.*] Struggling in the agony of death. We do not ordinarily use the verb now of persons. See 'Student's Hume,' p. 171.

57. *She-wolf of France.*] Isabel, Edward II.'s adulterous queen. (G.) This is the opprobrious name fastened on Queen Margaret, by Richard Duke of York, in 'Henry VI.' pt. iii. act i. sc. iv. l. 111.

— *Unrelenting.*] See note on *relentless*, III. 1. Notice the place of the relative.

58. *Bowels.*] An allusion to the mode in which Edward was murdered.

— *Mate.*] See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 733.

59. *Be born.*] May one be born, &c.! An execration like that in v. 1. It is prophetic of Edward III.'s triumphs in France, Isabel's country. (G.)

60. *Scourge.*] See Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 213. Bloody wars, famines, earthquakes, &c. are frequently considered to be sent by God as punishments for national sins.

60. *What terrors.] Cf. II. 55, and Virg. 'Æ.' xii. 335-6—*

Circumque ntrae Formidinis ora  
Iræque, Insidiæque, del comitatus, aguntur;

also Hom. 'Il.' v. 739-41.

61. *Amazement in his train.] Before him fly his foes amazed and confounded* (see note on v. 2); *behind him he leaves sorrow and desolation.*

62. Cf. 'Henry V.' Prologue, l. 6—

And at his heels,  
Leashed in like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire  
Crouch for employment;

also 'Henry VI.' pt. i. act i. sc. ii. l. 10.

— *Faded.] See II. 68.*

— *Antistrophe ii.*

63. Mighty conqueror and tyrant though he be, see him lying low, &c. Cf. Holy Bible, Isaiah xiv. 16-20. There is irony in the contrast between this and the next line.

64. *Lou.*] Prostrate. The allusion is to Edward III.'s death, abandoned by his children, and robbed in his last moments by his courtiers and his mistress. (G.)

— *Funeral couch.] Poetical for death-bed. Cf. 'funeral cry,' II. 39.*

65. Not strictly grammatical, but clear as to meaning. The fallen king has no heart to pity him, no eye to give proofs of that pity in tears. Notice that the verb is plural, as if governed by both nominatives. See Angus, 'H. E. T.' § 366.

66. *To grace his obsequies.] Cf. the relic of Ennius—*

Nemo me lacrymis decoret neque funera fletu  
Faxit.

The Lat. obsequie was substituted for the classical exsequie, and came to us early through French. The word is found in Chaucer, and by some writers is used in the singular.

67. *Sable warrior.] Edward the Black Prince died some time (about a year, 1377) before his father. (G.) On sable, see note, II. 25.*

69. *The swarm, &c.] There is an ellipse in this sentence which may, perhaps, be filled up by borrowing the auxiliary from 'is gone' in v. 67, in spite of the full-stop. By the swarm is meant the crowd of flattering courtiers to whom the 'noontide beam' (Edward's meridian of power and popularity) gave birth; the rising morn being the new king. 'Le roi est mort. Vive le roi!' Edward's sun had long since begun to decline, and was now about to sink behind the horizon. The swarm then, leaving an atmosphere in which they are likely to gain little warmth, hasten to bask in the sunshine of the newly-rising sun (Richard II.).*

71-76. These lines, which allegorise the doomed magnificence of Richard II.'s reign, have been almost universally admired. Coleridge (Biog. Lit. p. 9) was, perhaps, the first (cf. Crit. Introd. p. xxxi.) to

point out their real inferiority to the original simile in Shakspeare, from which Gray, however unconsciously, borrowed. See Shaks. 'Mer. of Ven.' act ii. sc. vi. l. 14—

How like a younker, or a prodigal,  
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,  
Hugged and embracèd by the strumpet wind!  
How like the prodigal doth she return,  
With over-weathered ribs and ragged sails,  
Lean, rent, and beggared by the strumpet wind!

[With which 'Hen. VI.' pt. iii. act ii. sc. i. l. 21, should be compared.]

Gray's lines may be paraphrased as follows: 'The morning is bright and promising, and softly the west wind blows, as the vessel, decked in all its bravery, rides proudly on the sea of life, with youth to point the way, and pleasure to steer in the course pointed out by youth. No thought is there of the silent whirlwind who, monsterlike, is grimly lying in wait till sunset for the prey which must then be his.' The allegory is thus explained:—The *morn* = early years of Richard II.'s reign; the *Zephyr* = flattery of court parasites; the *gilded vessel* = Richard II. or, possibly, the vessel of the state; the *riding*, &c. = the impetuous career of young ambition bent on following the guidance of passion and caprice, and heedless of the doom which awaits him at the close of his brilliant voyage.

71. *Fair . . . soft.*] Both adverbial forms; cf. v. 19.

72. *Azure realm.*] Blue sea. Coleridge (loc. cit.) thinks the rhyme to *helm* dearly bought. Azure, Sp. azul; Arab. or Pers. lazul, lazurd. Cf. lapis lazuli.

73. *Gallant trim.*] A poetical commonplace for *spruce, smart exterior*. See note on 'gaily-gilded trim,' I. 29; and on 'Samson Agonistes' (Bombay ed.), 710-719; also Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 80.

74. Ovid has a couplet not unlike this, 'Heroïd.' ep. xv. 215-16—

Ipse gubernabit residens in puppe Cupido;  
Ipsa dabit tenera vela legetque manu.

('Love himself shall sit at the stern and guide the helm: Venus with her own dainty hand shall spread and reef the sails.')

75. *Sweeping.*] Cf. 'sweepy sway,' Appendix, ii. 48.

— *Sway.*] Power. Another rhyme dearly bought. *Sway* (in this sense) is a favourite word of feebler poets. See note on v. 72.

76. *Grim.*] From the A.-S., but existing in some form in most Teutonic tongues, and allied to a large onomatopoetic group. See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 704.

— *Evening.*] Adjective. 'His prey, to be caught only after sunset.'

— Epode ii. According to the older writers, Richard II. was starved to death in Pontefract Castle. The story of his assassination by Sir Piers of Exon is of much later date. (G.) A.D. 1399. Richard II. was the son of 'the sable warrior,' the Black Prince.

86. *Kindred squadrons.*] The -d- seems to have been inserted into *kindred* merely to strengthen the two liquids. In the Chroniclers we find 'kynrede.' The epithet at once places before us all the horrors of civil war. (Mason.) Lucan's 'Pharsalia' opens with 'Cognatasque acies.' See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 511.

— *Mow their way.*] In Dryden's 'All for Love,' the lines occur—

Mow them out a passage,  
And entering where the foremost squadrons yield.

87. *Towers of Julius.*] The oldest part of the Tower of London is vulgarly believed to be the work of Julius Cæsar. (G.)

— *London's lasting shame.*] The supposed scene of many secret murders, e.g. of Henry VI., George Duke of Clarence, Edward V., Richard Duke of York, &c. (G.)

88. *Fed.*] There is a sort of half personification whenever such verbs as *to feed* are applied to inanimate objects. The towers are represented as thirsting for blood, and sharing to some extent in moral guilt. See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 4, 392.

89. *His consort's.*] Margaret of Anjou, a woman of heroic spirit, but unscrupulous ambition, who struggled hard to save her husband, and to preserve the throne to her son. (G.) See 'Student's Hume,' chap. xii.; and Shaksp. 'Henry VI.' pts. ii. and iii. *His* refers to *usurper*.

— *Father's.]* Henry V. (G.) See 'Student's Hume,' chap. xi.

90. Henry VI., though, as a Lancastrian, he was an *usurper*, was no tyrant. He was near being canonised by the Pope. (G.) Cf. II. 4.; and Shaksp. 'Henry VI.' part iii. act iv. sc. vi. &c.

91. *Rose of snow.*] The *white rose* was the device of the House of York. (G.)

92. *Blushing foe.*] The *red rose* was the device of the House of Lancaster. The student should consult Shaksp. 'Henry VI.' pt. i. act ii. sc. iv. on this subject.

93. *Bristled boar.*] *Bristled* is not a past participle, but an adjective = provided with bristles. Adams, § 193. The *silver boar* was the badge of Richard III., by which he was usually known in his own time. (G.) By his enemies he was styled 'the Hog.' The crest or bearing of a warrior was often used as a *nom de guerre*. See Scott's 'Lay,' canto iv. st. 30; 'L. of L.' ii. 200.

— *Infant gore.*] The blood of the two young princes who were murdered in the Tower by Richard's command.

94. *Wallors.*] A.-S. *wealwian*, *weallowigan*, to roll up. In O. E. the derivative of the A.-S. verb signifies to *wilher*. The Lat. *volvere*, Gk. *εἰλύειν*, Goth. *valv-ja*, are cognates.

— *Thorny shade.*] Formed by the intertwining of the roses at the marriage of Henry VII. of Lancaster and Elizabeth of York.

108. *Ye unborn ages.*] The afflictus of prophecy, the entrance into the mind of so many new strange images, is represented as painful. This is true to all the accounts we have of those who pretended to the gift of vaticination.

109. *Long-lost Arthur.*] The Welsh universally believed that Arthur was still alive in fairy-land, and would return once more to reign over Britain. (G.) Popular hero-worship often takes this form. We have instances in James IV. of Scotland, and the first Napoleon.

110. *Genuine kings.*] A prophetic allusion to the House of Tudor, in which the prophecies of Merlin and Taliessin, that Welsh sovereignty in Britain should be regained, seemed to be fulfilled. (G.) The earliest instance of 'genuine' quoted by Richardson is from Drayton (1563-1631).

— *All hail.*] See Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 399. *Hail* must here be regarded as a noun, with the adjective *all* in agreement.

— Antistrophe iii.

111. *Girt.*] Begirt, surrounded.

112. *Sublime.*] See note on VI. 38.

— *Starry fronts.*] Foreheads decked with jewels, or foreheads bright and glorious as stars. Cf. Milton's 'Passion,' 18—

His *starry front* low-roofed beneath the skies.

113. Cf. XII. 36.

— *Gorgeous.*] Fr. *gorgias* (a ruff, or neck-cloth). Came to be used as an adjective of anything flaunting and gay. But Wedgwood connects it more directly with *gorge*, in the sense of pride.

114. *In bearded majesty.*] In the Elizabethan era, as in regal Rome, the beard was worn universally. In vol. ii. of the 'Gentleman's Magazine' (p. 237), a critic remarks that it is historically inaccurate to represent the bard, whose own beard was *meteoric* (vv. 19, 20), as being struck by the *majesty* of the short curled beards worn in Elizabeth's reign. Nor is this the only defect in the passage, for Gray certainly would lead us to imagine that the ladies wore beards as well as the men.

115. *A form.*] The verb must be supplied from the preceding line.

116. Par. 'The flash of her eye betrays her ancestry.' *Lion-port* and *face* must be in construction with *proclaims* as much as *eye* is. Cf. VI. 64.

117. *Lion-port.*] Lion-like carriage or mien. This word *port* has now given place to *carriage* or *mien*, and to *deportment* in a slightly depreciatory sense. Gray makes the following quotation from Speed's account of an audience given by Queen Elizabeth to the Polish ambassador:— 'And thus she, lion-like rising, daunted the malapert orator no less with her stately *port* and majestic deporture, than with the tartness of her princelie cheekeas.'

118. Par. 'Brought into sweet harmony with the gentle benignity that befits a virgin queen.'

118. *Strings.*] Chords of the lyre or harp.

119. *Symphonious.*] Sounding in concert. From the Greek σύν (sún), together, and φωνή (phônê), a voice. Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 15.

120. *Vocal transport.*] Scil. ecstasy or rapture (note on VI. 2) of song, either existing in the singer or produced in the hearer. *Transport* is almost a Lat. translation of the Gk. ecstasy, and in native idiom we talk of people being *beside themselves*.

121. *Taliessin.*] 'Shining Forehead.' Chief of the Bards; he flourished in the sixth century. (G.) 'He was in the highest repute in the middle of the twelfth century, and then the hero of many romantic legends.' (Henry Morley.) Consult also Evans's 'Specimens of Welsh Poetry,' p. 18, and Turner's 'Vindication of the Ancient British Poems,' pp. 225, 237.

122. They—i.e. the symphonious strings and vocal strains—give forth inspiration potent to re-animate the dead remains, the *clay* of the long dead bard.

123. *Calls.*] Upon Taliessin to arise from his grave. 'And soars with rapture while she sings.' Congreve, 'Ode to Godolphin,' st. 6.

124. *The eye of heav'n.*] The sun. Cf. Spenser, 'F. Q.' iii. 4, 7—

Her angel's face

As the great eye of heaven shyned bright.

'Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,' Shaksp. 'Son.' xviii. Cf. Milton, 'P. L.' v. 171, and Ovid, 'Met.' iv. 226–228. And the eye of day, the eye of morn, the eyes of evening, are metaphors common to all ancient and modern poetry.

— Epode iii.

125. *Adorn.*] Poetry is again graced, as it was in the Bardic ages, by such themes as he mentions in the next verses. Of course the allusion is to Spenser and Milton.

126. Quoted from Spenser, 'Proem to F. Q.' 9—

*Fierce warres and faithfull loves shall moralize my song.* (G.)

127. Truth is *severe*, and therefore unattractive to the many, unless clad in the fairy garb of Fiction. The allusion is to Spenser.

128. *Buskined.*] i.e. measures suited to the drama. The κάθοπρος, cothurnus (sock or buskin), was a high shoe worn by tragic actors to give them height and dignity. It thus came to designate the tragic drama generally. Cf. toga, stage, sword, pen, &c. Buskin is the O. Fr. brossequin, M. Fr. brodequin, Du. broseken, perhaps from Gk. bursa, a *bide*. The allusion is to Shakespeare.

129. *Pleasing pain.*] Cf. III. 32: 'The sadly pleasing tear.'

130. *Horror.*] Cf. note on VI. 93, where Collins's 'Ode to Fear' is quoted.

— *Tyrant.*] Usurping the throne and exercising its cruel sway without a rival.

131-2. The construction of these lines becomes more obvious if they are transposed. The allusion is to Milton.

— *Eden.*] The garden in which Adam and Eve dwelt during the days of their innocence. See Holy Bible, Gen. ii. 8; Milton, 'P. L.' bk. iv. &c. The name is a Hebrew word meaning pleasure.

132. *Blooming.*] Gay with blossoms, though the word is often used generally and vaguely, without any distinct notion of its primitive sense.

133. *Distant warblings.*] An allusion to Milton's poetical successors. (G.)

134. Which grow fainter and fainter, till at length they die away altogether, being lost in the far-off future.

135. Another apostrophe to Edward.

— *Fond.*] Foolish. O. E. *fonne*, to dote. Cf. note on VI. 46.

— *Sanguine.*] Red with the blood of Welsh patriots.

136. *Raised by thy breath.*] Which thy breath (i. e. thy mandate) has caused to rise.

— *Orb of day.*] See note on v. 124.—With the whole passage compare the following lines from Wither, 'Shepheard's Hunting,' Ecl. 4 :—

The vapours that do breathe  
From the Earth's gross womb beneath,  
Seem they not with their black steams  
To pollute the sun's bright beams?

137. Cf. Milton, 'Lycidas,' 168-9—

So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,  
And yet anon repairs his drooping head.

— *Golden flood.*] Of light.

138. *Redoubled ray.*] True poetically. It attributes something of human feeling to the sun.

140. The different destinies which are assigned by our respective fates to you and to me. It may be doubted whether the singular *doom* should be used with *different* when more dooms than one are meant.

141. Par. 'Thou art welcome to thy sceptre, and with it to anguish and despair.' Pope talks of 'sceptred slaves' (Temple of Fame).

142. 'My lot is to die, but to die triumphant in the consciousness that I am avenged.' Cf. with this a striking picture in Statius, 'Theb.' iii. 61-87.

143. *Head-long.*] Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 416.

144. *Roaring.*] Cf. *awful voice*, v. 24.

— *Endless night.*] See note on VI. 102.

## VIII.

[This poem, like the 'Descent of Odin' and the 'Triumph of Owen,' was originally written for insertion in a History of English Poetry which Gray designed to publish in concert with his friend Mason, but which he abandoned on hearing that the task was already in the hands of Thomas Warton.]

In the eleventh century, Sigurd, Earl of the Orkney Islands, went to Ireland with a fleet and a considerable body of troops to the aid of Sigríð with the silken beard, who was then at war with her father-in-law, Brian, King of Dublin. The Earl and all his army were cut to pieces, and Sigríð was in danger of a total defeat; but the enemy suffered a greater loss by the death of Brian, who fell in the action. On Christmas Day (the day of the battle), a native of Caithness, in Scotland, saw at a distance a number of persons on horseback riding at full speed towards a hill, and seeming to enter it. Curiosity led him to follow them, till, looking through an opening in the rocks, he saw twelve gigantic figures resembling women; \* they were all employed about a loom, and as they wove, they sang the following dreadful song, which when they had finished, they tore the web into twelve pieces, and, each taking her portion, galloped six to the north and as many to the south. (G.) [Original Preface.]

1. *Loyer.*] Not the transitive verb formed from the comparative of 'low,' but akin to lurk, D. *loeren*, M. H. G. *lauern*. Probably there has been some convergence of sense between the two identical words.

2. *Loom of Hell.*] See note on VII. 52.

3. Imitated from Milton, 'P. R.' III. 323, 324—

How quick they wheeled, and flying behind them shot  
Sharp steel of arrowy showers. (G.)

Notice the omission of definite article and its effect.

4. Imitated from Shaksp. 'Julius Caesar,' act II. sc. II. l. 22—

The noise of battle *hurled in the air*.

— *Hurles.*] The affinity, at least in meaning, between this word and the more modern *hustle* may be gathered from a passage like the following from Shaksp. 'As You Like It,' act IV. sc. III. l. 130—

And nature, stronger than his just occasion,  
Made him give battle to the lions,  
Who quickly fell before him; in which *hurling*  
From miserable slumber I awaked.

\* The Valkyrmir (Choosers of the Slain) were female divinities, servants of Odin, in the Gothic mythology. They rode on swift horses, and had drawn swords in their hands, and in the throng of battle selected such as were destined to slaughter, and conducted them to Valkalla, the hall of Odin, or paradise of the brave, where they attended the banquet, and served the departed heroes with horns of mead and ale. (G.)

It is also akin to 'hurl.' 'And whenever he taketh him, he *hurlith* him down.' (Wicifl., Mark ix.) In fact, for a long time it seems to have been an unfixed onomatopœia. Mr. Morris compares the Fr. *heurter*, Du. *horten*, to dash against.

6. *Where.*] Originally the dative feminine singular of *who*, *where* means *in what place* (interrogative), or *in which place* (relative); cf. the similar idiom in Lat. and Gk.

— *Dusky.*] See note on VI. 62.

— *Strain.*] Stretch tightly; cf. Scott, 'L. of L.'

8. *Orkney's.*] See Preface and Map. The word is said in Gaelic to mean Islands of Whales.

9. *Grisly.*] See note on VII. 44; and III. 82.

— *Texture.*] Web. *Textura* is so used by the Latin poets. It is in meaning the same as tissue.

10. *Entrails.*] Fr. *entrailles*, as if from Lat. *intralia*, intra, within; but perhaps the more correct Lat. *interanea* may have really furnished the word, as it has the Sp. *entrañas*, Ital. *entragno*.

11. *Weights.*] Attached to the threads.

— *Play.*] Used vaguely of any quick motion.

12. *Gasping.*] With the lips parted as they were in the agony of death. Gasp, gape, and gulp are radically akin. If l. 10 is between brackets, then *weights* must be governed by *see*, and *head* is in apposition to *weights*.

13. *Shafts.*] Arrows or javelins. Tooke imagined it to be a past participle of *shore*, but it is rather from *shave*, A.-S. *scafan*, and means a smoothed rod. Cf. VI. 53, note.

— *For.*] In the place of, which serve as, *shuttles*.

— *Shuttles.*] The instrument that *shoots* between the threads of the warp, and carries the thread of the woof with it. Etymology identical with skuttle—viz. from A.-S. *sceotan*, to shoot.

14. *Trembling.*] Quivering with a remnant of vitality.

15. The sword which a king once wielded is to be used as a 'batten' for pressing the threads of the woof down into their place.

16. *Keep.*] Like *shoot*, this is imperative.

— *Tissue.*] See VII. 48.

18. *See.*] Is probably merely inserted interjectionally; *Mista*, *Sangrida*, and *Hilda* being together the nominative of the verb *join*.

19. *Wayward.*] Usually means perverse, self-willed, petulant. Its meaning, when used as an epithet of victory or fortune, is nearly that of capricious, uncertain, unstable.

20. *Woof.*] Here = that which is woven—web, texture.
21. *Ruddy.*] A.-S. *read*, *rnd* = M. L. *red*; A.-S. *rudduc* = red-breast. (Bosworth.)
22. *Piles.*] Fr. *pique*. A weapon used by infantry until the introduction of the bayonet. It consisted of a broad steel head fixed on a long wooden shaft.
- *Shirer.*] More commonly active in the sense of 'to break to pieces.' It is perhaps unconnected with *shirer* = 'to shake.'
- *Sing.*] Whistle or hiss as they rush through the air.
23. *Buckler.*] Fr. *bouclier*; a shield with a *boucle* or *bocle*, i.e. a boss, or protuberance.
24. *Hauerk.*] See note on VII. 5.
25. *Weare, &c.*] This kind of refrain is perhaps borrowed from the classical spinning songs, such as that of Catullus: 'Currite, ducentes subtemina, currite, fusi.' Such songs are common also in Teutonic languages.
29. *The paths of Fate.*] Cf. V. 36.
30. *Wading.*] Cf. V. 67.
32. *Youthful king.*] *Sigtryg*; see Preface.
34. *Ours.*] Scil. it is ours, i.e. it belongs to us, we have the power. This is called the *predicative form* of the pronoun.
38. *Pent.*] Pret. of the verb to pen. It refers perhaps to the natives of the Orkneys; see Preface.
- *Bleak.*] Another form of the same A.-S. word as 'bleach.' The meaning is primarily connected with colour; cf. Trench, 'Eng. Past and Pres.' lect. II. p. 97.
40. *The plenty.*] The plentiful harvest.
41. *Earl.*] *Sigurd*. See Preface.
44. *Bite the ground.*] 'To bite the dust' has been from the time of Homer downwards a recognised poetic expression for death in battle.
45. *Eirin.*] Or *Erin*; the Erc name for Ireland, the green island.
47. Par. 'For many ages shall Eirin's poetry be tinged with the sorrow caused by this calamity.'
50. *Blot.*] A great improvement on *veil*, the original reading.
56. *The younger king.*] See above, v. 30.
58. *Tenour.*] See note on V. 76.
- 59, 60. These lines are not in the original Norse.
62. *Thundering.*] See Scott, 'L. of L.' i. 139.
- *Wield.*] Let each wield—an indirect imperative.

## IX.

[The 'Vegtam's Kivitha,' or The Descent of Odin, was the original title.]

1. *King of men.*] Odin.

2. *Straight.*] Straightway.

— *Coal-black.*] An amplification not in the original. *Sleipner* was the steed's name.

3. *Yawning.*] Cf. gaping wound, VIII. 42.

4. *Hela's.*] Nisheimr, the hell of the Gothic nations, consisted of nine worlds, to which were devoted all such as died of sickness, age, or otherwise than in battle. Over which presided *Hela*, the goddess of death. (G.)

5. *Dog.*] Called in the Edda, *Managarmar*. (G.) Compare the classic Cerberus.

7. *Carnage.*] From Lat. *caro*, *carnis*, flesh. It is an abstract term, frequently used, as here, with a concrete sense.

8. *Distilled.*] Oozed forth in drops. Lat. *stillare*.

9. *Hoarse, &c.*] = Hoarsely he bays, &c., *not* = He, being hoarse, bays, &c.

10. Supply *with* from v. 9. 'With glowing eyes and grinning fangs.'

— *Fangs.*] From an A.-S. verb *fangan*, *to grasp*, which also existed in O. E. The O. H. G. *fanc* meant the talon of a bird.

11. *Fruitless.*] Because powerless to harm when under Odin's spell.

14. *Groaning.*] An epithet intended to convey the suggestion that earth felt Odin's tread to be that of a god. The idea is perhaps from the classics, in which it constantly occurs (*εροσίγαλος*, Homer). It is common to the poetry of Scripture also.

15. *Full before.*] Right in front of. Cf. note on *full many a, &c.* III. 22.

16. *Portals nine.*] See note on v. 4. The number of portals is not given in the original.

17. *Right against.*] This line occurs *verbatim* in Milton's 'L'Allegro,' 59.

18. *Moss-grown.*] See note on I. 13.

19. *Of yore.*] Cf. Scott, L. of L.' ii. 305.

21. *Facing to.*] Turning round so as to look towards the north.

22. *Thrice.*] The numbers three and nine are universally mixed up in supernatural phenomena and mystical rites.

— *Traced.*] Wrote them perhaps on the ground.

— *Runic rhyme.*] Runc, A.-S. *rūn*, Icel. *rún*, *rúna*, and found in all Teutonic languages, means 'mystery,' and was the name of the Norse letters.

21. 'The verse that wakes the dead' is in the original *Vallgaldr*, from *vallr* = *mortuus* (dead), and *galdr* = *incantatio* (a charm). (G.)

26. *Sullen*.] As would be natural from one awoke out of a deep slumber. Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' II. 791.

29. *Sprite*.] Spirit. It is not usually employed at present in this sense, though common in the older poets, as Spenser.

30. *Realms of night*.] Cf. VI. 9.

31. *Hare beat*.] Extreme cold and heat, like rain, hail, &c. are said to beat on the objects they affect.

33. *Drenching*.] To drench (A.-S. *drencean*) = to make to drink; cf. to fell, i.e. make to fall; to lay, i.e. make to lie. Here it means simply *soaking*.

— *Driving*.] Used of the rain when it is blown steadily and sharply in one direction.

35. *Unblest*.] Enphemism for *accurst*. Cf. Lat. *inamensus*, *illatibilis*, &c.

37, 38. In the order of the words in these two lines may be seen an illustration of the popular distinction between poetry and prose. In ordinary prose they would run thus: 'He that (who) calls is a warrior's son, a traveller unknown to thee.'

39, 40. *Far*. 'If thou wilt tell me what is done below (the deeds of darkness), thou shalt know (be informed of) the deeds of light (what is done above on earth)'.

41. *Yon*.] A graphic touch. He sees the preparations for an expected guest in the realms below.

— *Board*.] A.-S. *bord*, banqueting-table. By these questions he merely wishes to ask who is destined to die.

43. *Mantling*.] Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' I. 370. How this sense of rising and spreading was acquired is doubtful. We talk of 'mantling blood' in describing blushes; cf. Shakespeare.

44. By the pure beverage of the bee is meant what is called *mead* (O. E. *meth*), a drink prepared from honey.

46. *Balder*.] Odin's son, who had dreamed of his own impending death. He was slain by Hoder, who afterwards fell by the hand of Vall, the son of Odin and Rinda (v. 65).

55. Notice here and elsewhere in this poem the absence of the copula *is*, *are*.

61. *Comprest*.] In agreement with *Rinda*. 'Clasped in Odin's fierce embrace.'

66. *Raren hair*.] Hair black and glossy as the raven's wing.

67. *Visage*.] See Scott, 'L. of L.' I. 409. The Latin *visus*, in the sense of look, countenance, has supplied the basis of this word.

69. *Smile*.] A suggestive touch.

75. *What virgins these.*] Probably the *Nornir* (or *Parcae*), the dispensers of good destinies, named *Urda*, *Verdandi*, and *Skulda*. As their names signify time past, present, and future, it is probable that they were *always invisible to mortals*. Odin, then, by asking this question, betrays his godship to the prophetess. Hence her reply. (Mason.)

81. *Ha!*] An interjection expressing surprise at an unlooked-for discovery.

82. *King of men.*] Cf. v. 1.

84. *Boding.*] See Morris, 'Spec. Early Eng.' p. 383.

86. *Mother of the giant brood.*] In the Latin version, 'Mater trium gigantum.'

87. *Hie thee.*] This is an instance of the Gothic nenter reflective verb noticed by Latham, § 525.

89. *Iron sleep.*] *Iron* is often used thus figuratively to denote inflexibility, changelessness, weight.

90. *Lok.*] The evil being, who continues in chains till the *twilight of the gods* approaches, when he shall break his bonds; the human race, the stars, and sun, shall disappear, the earth sink into the seas, and fire consume the skies; even Odin himself and his kindred deities shall perish. (G.)

91. *Substantial.*] Real, solid, permanent; the idea being that out of night all things came, and to it they shall return. The word is one of those that we owe to mediæval scholasticism.

92. *Has reassumed.*] She held it before the creation of things.

93. *Hurl'd.*] See VIII. 4.

*Note.*—For a Latin translation of the original Norse, see 'Bartholinus,' lib. iii. c. ii. p. 632.

## X.

[‘*Y Gododin*’ was a poem of ninety-seven stanzas on the battle of Cattaeth, and the prowess of ninety Cymric chiefs, by Aneurin, a Welsh bard of the sixth century. See Evans’s ‘Specimens,’ pp. 71, 73; and Henry Morley, ‘English to the Time of Chaucer’; and Southey’s ‘Madoc in Wales,’ pt. ii.]

1. *Had I but, &c.*] Oh if I had only, &c., a common form of expressing a wish.

2. *Afright.*] Is to fright what affray is to fray, afeared to afraid; though the prefix does not in all these double forms etymologically represent the same thing.

3. *Dēira.*] Included Yorkshire, Lancashire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Durham.

— *Squadrons.*] See note on XI. 10.

— *Hurl'd.*] See note on VIII. 4. It is a participle in agreement with *I.*

5. *Too, too.*] See note on XI. 34.

## XI.

[From Evans's 'Specimens of the Welsh Poetry,' London, 1764. Owen succeeded his father Griffin in the principality of North Wales, A.D. 1120. This battle was fought near forty years afterwards. (G.) It is translated from an ode by Gwalchmai on the battle of *Tal y Moelvre*, about A.D. 1157. (H. Morley.)]

1. *Owen.*] Owain Gwynedd, Prince of North Wales. (Mason.)
2. *Swift and strong.*] Swiftness in pursuit and strength of sinew are heroic attributes in all ages.
3. *Roderic's stem.*] Roderic was Owen's ancestor.
4. *Gwyneth.*] North Wales.
- *Shield.*] *Bulwark* is the word in Evans's translation. See above. Owen, not Roderic, is meant.
5. Par. 'He neither hoards up wealth that he may brood over it, nor lavishly spends his substance on the deserving and undeserving alike.'
7. Par. 'Master of all that it becomes a king to know.'
8. The construction is not explicit. A 'liberal hand' and an 'open heart' are his distinguishing characteristics. The sensibility to others' distress is proved by the act of relieving it.
9. *Big with.*] Pregnant with. The metaphor is very common.
10. *Squadrons.*] i.e. fleets.
11. *Eirin.*] See note on VIII. 45. *Jicerddon* is the word in the original. (Mason.)
13. *On her shadow.*] A ship is not infrequently said to rest on her shadow. Canning, in his celebrated simile, speaks of 'those tremendous fabrics now reposing on their shadows in perfect stillness.'
14. *Lochlin.*] Denmark.
- *The watery way.*] Gk. *ὑγρὰ κέλευθα* (*hugra keleutha*). Cf. Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 564.
17. *Sweep.*] Used of any even, silent, majestic motion. Notice the group of words beginning with sw- : swing, swell, sway, swerve, swarm, swim, swill, &c.
18. *Angry deep.*] The anger of the sea may here indicate merely its swollen waves; or, personification being carried still further, it may be supposed to be in league with Owen's foes.
19. *Native sands.*] The north-west coast of Wales.
20. *Dragon son.*] The *red dragon* is the device of Cadwallader, which all his descendants bore on their banners.
- *Mona.*] The island of Anglesea, the stronghold of the Britons.
22. *Ruby.*] An allusion to the *red dragon*. With this use of *ruby*, cf. 'sapphire blaze,' VI. 99.

23. *Thundering.*] See note on VIII. 62.
24. *Press.*] The noun *press* with the sense 'crowd' is found even in the chroniclers. See 'Robert of Brunne,' ap. Richardson.
25. *Talymalhra.*] For the orthography of this word, see the quotation from Mr. Morley in the introductory note. It is *Tal Malore* in Evans's translation. The village of Moelfra and its rocky shore are well known in modern days as the scene of shipwrecks.
27. *Check'd.*] In his progress towards the sea by the blood which, like a tide in its effect, resembled a torrent in impetuosity. This is a piece of bombastic exaggeration for which Gray can hardly be held responsible.
28. *Meinai.*] Commonly spelt Menai. The tubular bridge which now spans the strait is well known.
30. *Gnaw the ground.*] Cf. *bite the ground*, VIII. 44. Vv. 27-30 were not in the earliest editions, but were added by Mason from Gray's MSS.
31. *Glowing eyeballs.*] Cf. IX. 10.
32. *Burn.*] It does not mean that they were on fire, but that their colours, quickly moving, flashed like flames. Cf. Farrar, 'Chaps. on Lang.' p. 210.
33. *Purple.*] Blood-stained. Cf. the use of *crimson*.
34. *Hasty, hasty.*] Cf. *hurry, hurry*, VIII. 64.
36. *Stop.*] To stand his ground. The word has a very unheroic ring.
37. *Confusion.*] Cf. VII. 2. Terror is aptly called the parent of confusion.
38. *Ruin.*] Cf. VII. 1.
39. *Agony.*] Of one at his last gasp.
40. It is to be observed that the last eight lines are amplifications of, if not entirely new additions to, the original Welsh.

## XII.

[Performed in the Senate-House at Cambridge, July 1, 1769, at the installation of the Duke of Grafton as Chancellor of the University.]

1. *Araunt.*] Begone (*away*, v. 12). Fr. *avant, en avant!* forward! The first instance of this interjectional use quoted by Richardson is from Shakspeare, who also uses a noun the *avaunt* = dismissal. Cf. Gk. ἐκάς, ἐκάς ὅττις ἀλυρός (Callimachus); and Virg. 'Æ.' vi. 258.

2. *Comus.*] See Milton's 'Comus,' 103: 'Midnight shout and revelry.' (Comus loquitur.)

3. *Ignorance, &c.*] Cf. the personifications in I. and III.

4. *Of pallid hue.*] A sort of antithesis to 'buxom health of rosy hue,' III. 45.

5. *Mad Sedition's.*] Mankind have always been charitable enough to consider disloyal and seditious persons as partially bereft of reason.

6. Cf. VI. 80.
7. Cf. Shaks. 'Mids. Night's Dream,' act iii. sc. 2, l. 7—  
Near to her close and consecrated bower.
8. *Serpent-train.*] Flattery is represented as having a human figure above but a serpent's train below, and this repulsive part of herself she hides in flowers. Cf. Pope, Ep. to Arbuthnot, 331.
9. The first eight lines being 'air,' the four next are 'chorus.' (Mason.)
- *Creeping.*] Advancing meanly and stealthily. Notice the group containing crawl, cringe, cramp, crouch, &c.
11. *Bright-eyed.*] Referring at once both to her beauty and her vigilance. Note Gray's frequent use of -eyed with bright, soft, &c.
13. The whole of this stanza is 'recitative,' but accompanied at v. 19. (Mason.)
- *Empyrean day.*] Gk. ἐμπυρώς—ἐν (en), in, πῦρ (pur), fire. One of the earliest notions of Greek natural philosophers was that of a sphere of pure perfect eternal light surrounding the atmosphere of earth, and lying beyond the blue sky. This notion was taken up by the poets and divines of the sixteenth century and worked out to weariness. The empyrean, or empyrean heaven, is often spoken of by Milton. With this passage cf. Cowley, 'Hymn to Light'—
- But the vast ocean of unbounded day  
In the empyrean heaven doth stay.
17. *Unborn age.*] Cf. VII. 108.
18. *Rapt.*] Hence the noun *rapture*. The copula *are* is omitted with effect.
21. *The place.*] Cambridge.
22. *Genuine ardour.*] In Pope's 'diction' this would probably be 'native rage.'
23. *Shell.*] See note on VI. 15.
25. *Meek Newton.*] Newton always formed a most modest estimate of his own genius, and was singularly devoid of self-consciousness.
26. *Nods.*] In approbation.
27. The whole of this stanza is 'air.' Being supposed to be sung by Milton, it is very judiciously written in the metre which he chose for the stanza of his Christmas-hymn. (Mason.) Cf. with the language of this line Milton's 'Il Penseroso,' 133, 134.
28. *Contemplation loves.*] Cf. I. 31.
29. *Willowy.*] Whose banks are fringed with willows. The Cam, like most rivers, has a name of Keltic origin, which signifies crooked or winding.
30. *At the blush of dawn.*] The ruddy hue that spreads over the eastern sky before the sun appears.
31. *Woo'd the gleam, &c.*] Cf. 'Il Penseroso,' 63, 64.

— *Cynthia.*] The moon, identified in mythology with Artemis or Diana, and so called from Mount Cynthus, in Delos, the birthplace of Artemis and Apollo.

33. *Dim.*] Sometimes written dimn, and connected perhaps with dumb. It is itself used of sound as well as light.

34. *Soft-eyed Melancholy.*] Cf. 'Il Pensero,' 61, 62. This whole stanza seems to be a series of echoes of Milton, especially of part of 'Il Pensero.'

35. This stanza is 'recitative' throughout, the last nine lines accompanied. (Mason.)

36. 'With steps slow and solemn.' Cf. Milton, 'P. L.' xii. 648—  
With wandering steps and slow.

37. *Potentates.*] Lit. 'persons in power,' though not necessarily kings.

38. *Mitred fathers.*] Ecclesiastical dignitaries of the highest rank. A bishop is styled a 'father in God.'

— *In long order.*] A translation of 'longo ordine,' Virg. 'Æ.' vi. 754, &c.

39. *Great Edward.*] Edward III., who added the *fleur-de-lys* of France to the arms of England. He founded Trinity College. (G.) This explains 'the lilies on his brow.'

41. *Sad Chatillon.*] Mary de Valentia, Countess of Pembroke, daughter of Guy de Chatillon, Comte de St. Paul in France. Tradition tells us that her husband, Audemar de Valentia (Aymar de Valence), Earl of Pembroke, was slain at a tournament on the day of his nuptials. She founded Pembroke College, under the name of Aula Mariz de Valentia. (G.)

42. *Princely Clare.*] Elizabeth de Burg, Countess of Clare, was wife of John de Burg, son and heir of the Earl of Ulster, and daughter of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, by Joan of Acres, daughter of Edward I. Hence the epithet of *princely*. She founded Clare Hall in Cambridge. (G.)

43. *Anjou's heroine.*] Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI., foundress of Queen's College. (G.) Her conjugal fidelity has been celebrated in a previous ode, VII. 89.

— *The paler Rose.*] Elizabeth Widville (or Wydeville), wife of Edward IV., so called as being of the House of York. See note on VII. 91.

45. *Either Henry.*] Henry VI.—*the murdered saint*—and Henry VIII.—*the majestic lord.* The former founded King's College (and Eton; see III. 4, note); the latter was the greatest benefactor to Trinity College.

47. *That broke the bonds of Rome.*] Who threw off the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Pope. What is commonly known as 'The English Reformation' dates from the reign of Henry VIII. See 'Student's Hume,' and Froude's 'History of England.'

50. *Charity.*] See note on II. 30. With *glows* here, cf. the epithet *warm* in the parallel passage.

51. *Granta's.*] The presiding goddess of the University. Possibly the original name of the river, and thence transferred to the University.

53. *Aurful fanes.*] Shrines or sacred buildings (e.g. King's College Chapel) surrounded by, and inspiring men with, the awe which belongs to their sacred character, their majestic beauty, and their antiquity.

54. *Their Fitzroy.*] Augustus Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton, great-great grandson of Charles II. *Their* expresses that he is one of them, and dear to them.

56. *Liquid language.*] Lucretius (V. 1378) talks of 'liquidas voces.'

57. This stanza is 'air quartetto.' Its suitableness for that kind of music has been much extolled by musical readers. (Mason.)

58. The question just asked is answered.

60. *Memory.*] Remembrance. Active, not passive; subjective, not objective; as we may learn from l. 64.

61. *Sweet is, &c.*] Cf. Milton, 'P. L.' iv. 641, and the opening lines of Lucretius' second book.

63. *Melting fall.*] Like 'dying cadence,' expresses the gentle, gradual cessation of the sound.

64. *Still small voice.*] The expression is borrowed from Holy Writ (see 1 Kings xix. 12), and is in common use as applied to conscience and other secret promptings of the soul.

— *Of gratitude.*] Cf. grateful, v. 60.

65. The first six lines of this stanza are 'recitative,' the rest 'air.' (Mason.)

— *Golden cloud.*] The nimbus, or effulgent glory, surrounding gods and heroes. Christian art borrowing from the classics, has applied the fancy to saints. Cf. Virg. 'Æ.' ii. 615.

66. *Margaret.*] Countess of Richmond and Derby, the mother of Henry VII. She founded St. John's and Christ's Colleges.

69. *Lineaments.*] See Scott, 'L. of L.' ii. 670.

70. *A Tudor's fire, &c.*] The Countess was a Beaufort, and married to a Tudor. The Duke of Grafton claimed descent from both families. Hence the application of the language to him. Junius says: 'The character of the reputed ancestors of some men has made it possible for their descendants to be vicious in the extreme without being degenerate. Those of your Grace, for instance, left no distressing example of virtue, even to their legitimate posterity; and you may look back with pleasure to an illustrious pedigree, in which heraldry has left not one single good quality on record to insult or upbraid you.' For a very different account of the Duke of Grafton's character from that given by Gray in the text, the Letters of Junius should be consulted. He writes to the duke: 'The first uniform principle, or, if I may call it, the genius, of your life has carried you through every possible change and contradiction of conduct, without the momentary imputation or colour of a virtue, and the wildest spirit of inconsistency has never once betrayed you into a wise or honourable action.'

71. *Judging eye.*] i.e. discerning. Cf. Pope, Prologue to 'Satires,' 246—  
*Dryden alone escaped this judging eye.*
72. *Descry.*] 1. To announce a discovery by a cry of joy or surprise.  
 2. To discover. (Wedgwood.) With *flouter unheeded*, cf. 'Elegy,' 55, 6.
73. For the form of expression, cf. v. 53, above.
75. *Latent.*] Lurking undiscovered (from Latin *lateo*, to lie concealed). Cf. V. 53. Gray means to say that the Duke of Grafton will, as Chancellor of the University, encourage modest and retiring genius. This is no doubt intended to express that the duke will give Church preferment to those who seem to him to merit it.
76. *To glitter.*] Political promotion is referred to in this verse.
77. This stanza is 'recitative' throughout. (Mason.) For *Granta*, see v. 51.
78. *Not obvious.*] Cf. Milton, 'P. L.' viii. 504—  
*Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired*  
*The more desirable.*
- Obvious* in both cases must be taken in its original etymological meaning of *standing in the way*, while *obtrusive* has its ordinary and literally correct meaning of *given to thrusting herself forward*.
79. Cf. Pope to Lord Oxford, 36—  
*No hireling she, no prostitute for praise.*
- *Incense.*] Cf. 'Elegy,' 71-2.
80. *Courtly.*] The distinction between *courteous* and *courtly* is this: that is *courteous* which *becomes* a courtier or the court; that is *courtly* which *resembles* a courtier or the court. The former word conveys no shade of disapprobation, the latter does.
81. *Profane.*] The correct meaning of the verb is to use holy things for unholy purposes, and so disgrace and desile them. Here the sense is, 'We will not dishonour and shock your noble feelings by an attempt at a style of address unbecoming at once to you and to ourselves.'
82. The commentators quote the saying of Pythagoras,  $\pi\alpha\tau\tau\omega\delta\epsilon$  μάλιστ' αἰσχύνεο σαυτόν ('But above all things revere thyself').
83. Cf. Milton, 'P. L.' iv. 310: 'Yielded, with coy submission, *modest pride*.'
- *Laureate.*] Of laurels.
84. *Cecil.*] Cecil, Lord Treasurer Burleigh, was Chancellor of the University in Elizabeth's reign. (G.)
86. *The fasces.*] These were the emblems of 'imperium,' or supreme authority, in republican Rome, and were carried by the lictors in procession before the chief magistrates. Dryden uses the word in a similar sense, and with more licence:—  
*And with a willing hand restores*  
*The fasces of the main.*—'Turenod. Aug.' 284.

88. *Symphonious.*] See note on VII. 119. Cf. Milton, 'P. L.' vii.  
558-9—

And the sound

Symphonious of ten thousand harps, &c.

This stanza is 'Grand Chorus.' (Mason.)

89. This recalls a line of Milton's (*Comus*, 87)—

Well knows to still *the wild winds when they roar.*

90. *Mien.*] See the quotation from Wedgwood on II. 38.

91. This is addressed to the newly installed Chancellor.

92. Very like the advice given by Horace to his friend Licinius ('*Od.*' ii. 10).

93. *The star of Brunswick.*] Perhaps the poet wishes to suggest that the interests of his royal master are to be as a pole star to the minister. The notion that a star can be attached to the fortunes of a king, or a royal house, is meaningless to Gray, and is borrowed by him from classical poets. It dates further back than classical antiquity, and is found in all literatures, and indeed in almost all forms of speech.

94. *Gilds.*] Imparts a lustre to the dark stormy waters, the simile of the star being kept up.

## NOTES TO APPENDIX.

### I.

1. *To me.*] So far as I am concerned; a classical use of the dative.

— *Smiling.*] A hackneyed epithet of morn, and, as Coleridge has pointed out, 'not quite congruous with the common and material attribute of shining' (Biog. Lit. ch. xviii. p. 182).

2. *Reddening.*] This may be taken either as synonymous with *glowing*, or as transitive = *making red*, though this latter is not its original force. The A.-S. verb is *readian* = to grow red. Coleridge (Biog. Lit. p. 183) condemns the line as 'bad, not because the language is distinct from that of prose (which was the charge brought by Wordsworth), but because it conveys incongruous images, confounds the cause and the effect, the real thing with the personified representative of the thing; in short, because it differs from the language of good sense.'

— *Phæbus.*] Apollo, the Sun—'a schoolboy image,' says Coleridge. *Golden* is redundant.

3. *Descant.*] In the noun the accent is, as here, on the first syllable; in the verb on the second. For meaning and etymology, see Wedgwood.

4. *Attire.*] O. Fr. *atour* = a head-dress; then *dress* generally. See Wedgwood.

5. *These ears.*] Of the speaker, who *repined* (i.e. was consumed with longing) for the familiar notes of his friend's voice. The A.-S. *pinian* = (1) to punish, torture, (2) to languish. There is no connection between this poetical use of repine for pine (cf. repentance = penitence) and the verb *to repine*, derived from It. *repugnere*, Fr. *repouindre*; on which see Wedgwood.

6. *A different object.*] From the green fields, cf. v. 4. To require is to seek or ask for, cf. v. 90.

7. *Anguish.*] From Lat. *angustia*, through Fr. *angoisse*, It. *angoscia*. Lat. *angor* = (1) quinsy, (2) mental strangulation.

8. *Imperfect.*] Incomplete, being marred by the absence of him whose presence would have made them perfect.

9. *Yet.*] There is a contrast between the lonely mourner silently nursing his grief, and the outside world to whom the smiling mornings do not shine in vain.

10. *Happier.*] Than I. For a protest against words from the root *hap*, see Trench, 'Study of Words,' p. 73.

11. *Tribute.*] This is the idea, so familiar to the classical student, that the seed committed to the ground is so much capital which in due season is returned to the husbandman 'with usury thereto.' See Cicero, 'De Senect.' c. xv.

12. *Par.* 'The birds keep alive their loves by singing to each other.' To *complain* is the classical expression for the cooing of doves, the warbling of birds, &c.

13. *Fruitless.*] Adverbial. Like the rest of the sonnet, it is classical.

14. The realisation of the fact that the loss sustained is irreparable, deepens instead of lessening the sense of pain. This touch, pointing as it does to the irrational nature of grief, is true to nature.

*Note.*—For information as to the history and essential character of the species of composition known as a *Sonnet* (from *Sonata* = an accompanied song), the student is referred to vol. i. of Leigh Hunt's 'Book of the Sonnet,' pp. 13–15. For a defence of Gray's Sonnet from the criticisms of Wordsworth (in the famous Preface) and of Coleridge (see note on v. 1), reference should be made to pp. 81–84 of the same work.

## II.

1–21. A double simile. 'Men without education may be compared to sickly plants in a poor soil; without good government, to plants that will not bear fruit in an ungenial climate.'

1. *Betray.*] On the unusual addition of the particle *be* to a verb imported from the Fr. (*trahir*), see Wedgwood.

— *Niggard.*] Substantive used as an adjective. In the root of this and the cognate words is the idea of scraping or gnawing (Wedgwood).

2. *Generous.*] See note on II. 45.

— *Birth.*] = the thing born, brought forth; A.-S. *beorth*, from A.-S. *beran* = to bear.

3. Par. 'And does not retain either g. w. or &c.' Cf. v. 88. This is after the Latin usage. So Coleridge, in the 'Ancient Mariner,' writes—

Water, water everywhere,  
Nor any drop to drink. [= And not one.]

— *Genial.*] See note on V. 52.

— *Juice.*] Sap. Is this the same word as the Latin *jus*—(1) broth, (2) liquid, juice? Cf. Sans. *yūsha*.

4. *Verdant veins.*] Cf. Chaucer, 'C. T.' Prologue, 3, 4.

5-8. These lines contain the first part of the second simile.

5. *Holds his reign.*] Cf. III. 36; V. 12, notes.

6. *Will not.*] This is not the sign of the future tense, but the present of the verb *to will*. So *will not teem in vain* might stand in prose *refuses to bring forth to no purpose*.

7. *Gems.*] Buds. Lat. *gemma* is said to be a contraction of *genima*, from the root GEN. It is worth noticing that the A.-S. verb meaning to bloom or bud is *gimmian*.

— *Shades.*] Put for the leafy growths which furnish shade. *Umbra* is similarly used in Latin poetry.

8. *Nor trusts.*] See note on v. 3:—'and refuses to entrust.'

— *Churlish.*] A. S. *ceorlisc*, like a churl (*ccorl*) = a freeborn but common rustic; see Trench, 'Study of Words,' p. 30. In modern English *churl* has been displaced by *clown* or *boor*. Here it means simply *rude* and *rough*.

9-12. These lines contain the parallel to the first part of the double simile.

9, 10. Par. 'Equally is it to no purpose that men drink in the breath which is life itself (vital) if they be not formed and befriended by,' &c.

12. An allusion to the twofold object of education—to draw out the powers of thought and to cultivate and moralise the feelings.

13. *Fond.*] Foolish, doting, from O. E. *fonne*, to be foolishly attached to any one. See note on VI. 46. The epithet is proleptic here.

14. *Idly.*] *In vain*, vv. 6, 9. Cf. 'Tears, *idle* tears,' &c.

— *Lavishes.*] To *lavish* anything is to deal with it as with water used for bathing. See Wedgwood.

15. *Unclouded.*] Explained by *smile* in l. 16.

16. *Smile not . . . on.*] To *smile upon* is to regard with favour, to look kindly at; just as to *frown upon* is to look on with disfavour. See V. 119, 'Fair Science,' &c.

17. *Free though frugal.*] Thrift or frugality is not incompatible with liberality, freehandedness.

18. *Golden.*] Cf. Hor. 'Epp.' i. xii. 28—

*Aurea fruges  
Italiam pleno defudit copia cornu.*

19. *But.*] i.e. if instead of equal justice, &c., tyranny.

20. *To check.*] Gerundial infinitive = with the effect of checking, &c.  
 — *Tender.*] = young. Cf. *terdant*, v. 4.
21. *Blast.*] Blight or destroy at one blow. Cf. VI. 101.
- 22-37. An examination of the characteristics which all men have in common.
22. *Animated.*] Full of life and animation.
- *Scene.*] For a protest against the vague use of this word when no reference to a theatre is intended, see Coleridge, 'Biog. Lit.' xx. 199, note.
23. *Gives the day.*] Scil. gives to men the light of day.
24. *Sable.*] See note on II. 25.
25. *Life's.*] i.e. wherever human life can be sustained.
- *Either.*] Both the one and the other = Lat. *uterque*. For other examples see Richardson.
26. *Rude.*] See note on I. 18.
27. *Hote'er.*] To what extent soever.
- *Tinge.*] v. a. from Lat. *tingo* (*tinguo*), Gr. *τέγγω* = (1) to moisten, (2) to dye, give a colour to.
28. *Impartial.*] The impartiality is shown by giving *to all alike*.
30. *With.*] 'Having, or because they have, the sense,' &c.
31. 'Pleasure is the object of general pursuit, pain of general avoidance.'
32. The fancy, when not held in check by judgment or reason, runs riot and becomes *delirium*.
- *Mends.*] Lat. *emendare*, to remove a fault.
33. *Event.*] Issue, result; antithesis of *cause*. We now use *outcome* in precisely the same way.
- *Presages.*] Divines beforehand, has a presentiment of. Our word  *sagacious* contains the same root.
- *Explores.*] Learns by careful investigation.
34. 'The feeling of gratitude for benefits received is universal.'
35. 'So is the instinct of self-preservation, which prompts a man to elude a stronger, to repel a weaker foe.'
36. Cf. Pope's 'Essay on Man,' iii. 112: 'On *mutual* wants build *mutual* happiness.' When standard authors lend the countenance of their authority to a solecism like the misuse of *mutual*, it seems almost hopeless to ask ordinary people to remember that anything in which two or more have a share is not *mutual* but *common*. *Mutual* wishes strictly mean good wishes reciprocated, received and returned. But what are we to understand by *mutual woes*? In the passage quoted from Pope the word is intended to imply that the want and happiness are reciprocal.
- 38-64. 'Whence, then, comes the diversity of national characters?'
39. The construction is not difficult though somewhat involved.
40. *Here.*] In one climate.
- *Measured.*] Duly weighed and deliberately enacted.
- *Philosophic ease.*] It was to the *ease* (*σχολή*) which her freemen enjoyed that Greece owed the intellectual supremacy which has never been taken from her.

42. *There.*] In another climate.

— *Their vigils keep.*] A *vigil* (Lat. *vigilia*) is strictly a night-watch, and is then applied to wakefulness enforced in the hours commonly devoted to sleep.

43. The tone of this reminds one of the 'Georgics' of Virgil. See note on V. 28.

44. *Hardy.*] Fr. *hardi*, It. *ardito*, daring. See Wedgwood.

45. *Sighs.*] The gale being said to *sigh* (cf. Latin *fremo*, *strido*), the epithet belonging to the gale is transferred to the pleasure which is wafted by it. For etymology see Richardson.

47. *Scythia.*] See Herodotus, bk. iv. 99, 101, and the early chapters of the same book; cf. also Professor Rawlinson's Essay 'On the Ethnography of the European Scyths,' vol. iii. pp. 157-167.

48. *Deluge.*] Claudian, 'Bell. Get.' 641, uses 'Cimbrica tempestas' with a similar meaning.

— *Sweepy sway.*] Warton, in his 'Pl. of Melancholy,' p. 209, has imitated this uncouth expression: 'The dull clock swinging slow with *sweepy sway.*' For the meaning and origin of *sway*, see Wedgwood (under *Swag*). Cf. also VII. 75.

50. Cf. Thomson, 'Liberty,' iv. 803; 'Winter,' 840.

51. Cf. Pope's 'Dunciad,' iii. 89. Gibbon (Decline and Fall, ch. xxxiii. p. 548) talks of 'The fair complexion of the *blue-eyed* warriors of Germany,' &c.

52. Refers to the conquest of Italy by the barbarians.

54. *Grim.*] An A.-S. word, *grimm*, from *grimre*. The substantive *grim* = rage, fury (Bosworth). *Grim delight* is a sort of oxymoron.

— *Brood.*] A.-S. *brod*, *bredan*; see Wedgwood. With these lines compare Gibbon, ch. ix. *passim*, and ch. xxxi. p. 519.

55. *Brighter.*] 'Than in the climes where winter holds his reign,' v. 5.

— *Heavens.*] It is a pity Gray did not keep the old reading *skies*. On *heaven* see Trench, 'Study of Words,' p. 185.

56. *Scent.*] Drink in with distended nostrils that fragrance which to them is *new*. To the 'bleak and barren hills of Scythia' the rose was a stranger.

— *Breathing.*] Gibbon, in quoting this line (*loc. cit.*), reads *opening*.

57. *Quaff.*] To drink copiously, according to Richardson, who would trace it back to the A.-S. *waffian*. He compares the Scotch *queff*=a drinking-vessel.

— With the line cf. Claud. 'B. G.' 504; Ov. 'Am.' i. .55; Virg. 'G.' ii. 89.

58-63. 'Why has Asia been from time immemorial the seat of Despotism, Europe the home of Freedom?'

58. *Pliant.*] Submissive, yielding. See note on III. 26.

59. *Nod.*] The sign of authority. When Zeus nods, all Olympus trembles.

60. *European.*] Of Europe.

61. Cf. *deluge*, v. 48.

64-72. 'Are we from these examples to infer that men are necessarily slaves to the inconveniences of the climate under which they are born ?

67. *Eye of day.*] See note on V. 98.

68. *Northern Star.*] The Aurora Borealis ; or is the constellation of Boötes meant ? Or, again, is it poetical for northern zone ?

69. *String.*] Lat. *stringo*, *strictum*, Gr. στραγγω (strango) = to compress, draw tight. So to *nerve*.

— *Steel.*] Lit. to give an edge to. Steel is etymologically an *edge metal* (Wedgwood).

71. *Sickening.*] Ger. *siechen*, to languish, to fade away, dry up.

— Cf. the opening lines of Byron's 'Bride of Abydos.'

— *Fly.*] In strict usage this should be *flee* or *fly from*.

72-83. 'Are we not rather to suppose that there is a natural strength in the human mind which is able to vanquish and break through them ?'

72. *Control.*] Fr. *contreroller* = to check the accounts of a subordinate. In the old editions this is spelt *controul*, for an obvious though a foolish reason.

73. *Fancied.*] Existing not in fact but in imagination.

— *Zone.*] Lit. belt or girdle (Gk. ζώνη).

— *Circumscribe.*] See V. 65.

74. *She.*] Psyche, the soul ; also the Greek name for the butterfly.

75. *Resolution's.*] Explained by *dauntless* in v. 76.

76. *Frail companion.*] The body. For *frail* see note on V. 78 : for *dauntless* see note on V. 57.

77. *Zembla.*] Taken as the type of countries in the frigid, as *Libya* is of those in the torrid zone (on which consult Herod. bk. iv. *passim*).

79. *Temper.*] This word, according to Trench (Study of Words, p. 90), has its origin in the same exploded theory of medicine as the words *humour*, &c. ; the theory, namely, that 'there were four principal "humours" in the natural body, on the due proportion and combination of which the disposition alike of body and of mind depended. The due admixture of these humours constituted a happy *temper*.' The subsequent applications of the word are obvious.

80. *Suspends.*] Does not abrogate but supersedes ; the lower is in obeyance to the higher.

81. *Elements.*] The components of that compound which we call man.

82. *Refine.*] The subject of this verb is *elements*. By *little* is meant petty, vulgar.

83. *The mortal.*] i.e. that which is mortal.

84-85. 'It must be admitted, however, that men receive an early tincture from the locality in which they live, and from the climate which produces them.'

84. *Not but.*] Elliptical for 'I do not deny that the,' &c.

86. *A various.*] Poetical for various toils, or a variety of toils.
87. *The idiom.*] The language or dialect peculiar to.
- 88-96. 'Thus the inhabitants of a mountainous country are naturally trained to war.'
89. *Foes.*] In agreement with *cliffs*.
- 90: *For.*] This introduces the reason for the statement of the previous lines. *Unwearied* = insensible of fatigue.
91. *Sidelong.*] Lat. 'obliquo aratro.' Cf. Virg. 'G.' i. 98; and Goldsmith's 'Traveller,' .
93. *Brave.*] Defy, confront boldly. See Latham's 'Dict.'
96. Notice the alliteration.
97. *Want and Liberty.*]
98. A parenthesis explanatory of the line which follows.
99. *Insult.*] Trample on, as in V. 77, where the substantive *insult* is best taken literally.
- *Vales.*] A valley is proverbially the native home of plenty.
- 100-107. 'From their geographical situation the Egyptians' might well be the inventors of home navigation, owing to the necessity of keeping up internal communication during the Nile's inundation.'
101. *Redundant o'er.*] Overflowing, from Lat. *redundo*. Cf. Lucr. vi. 713; and Claudian, 'Nilus,' 7 (Ægyptos being the subject)—
- Gaudet aquis quas ipsa vehit Niloque redundat.
- *His.*] Appropriate of a river-god. It must be remembered, however, that *his* was originally neuter and masculine.
103. Cf. with this fine though rather far-fetched image, Denham, 'Cooper's Hill' (descriptive of the Thames)—
- O'er which he kindly spreads his spacious wing,  
And hatches plenty for th' ensuing spring.
104. *Ready.*] A.-S. *ræd, geræd*, prepared.
105. *Dusky.*] See note on VI. 62.
- *Drive.*] A nautical trope. Pope uses the same word of the gale, 'Essay on Man,' iii. 178: 'Spread the thin oar and catch the driving gale.' With the line cf. Dryden's 'Virgil,' G. iv. 409.
106. *Frail floats.*] A *float* is a raft of the rudest construction, and called *frail* from the nature of its material—viz. *papyrus*. With the line cf. Lucan, 'Phars.' iv. 135, 136.
- *Neighbouring.*] This is an improvement on *distant*—the old MS. reading.
107. *Ambient.*] From the Lat. *ambiens*, participle of *ambio*, to surround, encompass.
- Note.*—For remarks on this magnificent fragment, see 'Crit. Introd.' p. xxii.; and compare Gibbon, 'Decline and Fall,' ch. xxxi. p. 519, note m, with the notes of Mason. The meaning of the exordium may be thought a little obscure. This obscurity is removed by transposing, as

Mason suggests, as follows:—Let vv. 9–12 ('So draw'—'heart') stand immediately after v. 4, and transfer vv. 5–8 ('And as'—'skies') to the place of vv. 9–12.

## III.

[This *jeu d'esprit*, which Mason says Gray rejected in his own selection of his republished poems, and which was coldly received in the first instance by a 'public' for whom it was not written, finds a place in the present edition on two grounds. First, it merits preservation as a masterpiece of its kind; and, secondly, it is the sole specimen we have of Gray's peculiar humour, reflecting, as it does, in no ordinary measure, the fastidious and eccentric character of the man. It would not be difficult, moreover, to put one's finger on more than one short composition of the present Laureate which owes something, both in spirit and expression, to Gray's 'Long Story.' Compare 'The Goose' and 'Amphion.' The notes appended are taken chiefly from Mason, and are merely such as the student, who has not Gray's memoirs at hand for reference, is likely to need in elucidation of the incidents narrated.]

St. 1. The mansion-house at Stoke (Gray's mother and aunts lived at Stoke; see 'Biog. Introd.' p. xiii.), then in the possession of Viscountess Cobham, was formerly the property of the Earls of Huntingdon and the family of Hatton.

St. 2. A humorous description of the *Elizabethan* style of architecture.

St. 3, 4. Hits off the manners and attire of the time. Who is meant by *England's Queen*, the student needs not to be told.

St. 6. The *brace of warriors* were Miss Speed—a relation of Lady Cobham—and Lady Schaub, a friend then on a visit to the mansion.

St. 11. Mr. P—t was a friend and neighbour of the poet. He was, it seems, much displeased at the liberty taken with his name.

St. 15. With this stanza compare Tennyson's 'Goose,' st. 13.

St. 17. An *imbroglio* is It. for the English *embroilment* or state of complete confusion and perplexity. Cf. the use of *broil*.

St. 22. Having called himself an *imp* (i.e. a child of hell or darkness), who was to be got rid of by *enchantment*, the poet very properly converts the card left on the table into a *spell*. The minuteness of the subsequent description is intended as a burlesque of the old writers on such matters.

St. 25, 26. Mason remarks of the humour of these stanzas that it is in the manner of *Prior*.

St. 27. Enter a chorus of old ladies of quality (disembodied) to give sentence on the culprit poet. Mason compares the introduction of Cadwallo, Urien, and Hoel in the *Bard*.

St. 28. *Slyack.*] The housekeeper (G).

St. 31. *Squib.*] Groom of the chamber (G).

— — *Groom.*] The steward (G).

St. 32. *Maclean.*] A famous highwayman, hanged the week before (G).

St. 34. To save one's bacon is a homely proverbial way of expressing a narrow escape from a fatal mischance. It is said to have originated in the precautions taken by careful housewives to save their bacon (i. e. their dried meat) from the rapacity of soldiers on the march.

St. 35. *Hagged.*] This is not connected in any way with *haggard* (the name given to an unreclaimed hawk, VII. 18, note), but an adjective formed from *hag* = a witch. See Richardson under *Hag*.

With this stanza the 'Long Story' comes to an end. The exclamation of the ghosts (says Mason) is characteristic of the Spanish manners of the age in which they are supposed to have lived; and in the lost 500 stanzas we may suppose the rest of their long-winded expostulation to have been enshrined.

#### IV.

[This 'sketch' was found in one of Gray's pocket-books, and given to the world by Mason. It should be read with the 'Biog. Introd.']

1. *Importune.*] i.e. to besiege the great with petitions made in season and out of season. Gray could not afford to buy himself preferment, and was too proud to ask for it.

3. The satire in this and v. 4 requires no comment. On the meaning of *odd* and *singular*, see Trench, 'Study of Words,' p. 186; and compare Wedgwood.

5. *Charles Townshend.*] In wit and forensic ability he was, in the opinion of Horace Walpole, scarcely inferior to Charles James Fox. His policy as Chancellor of the Exchequer in Chatham's ministry (1767) hastened the revolt of the American colonies. He died in the same year.

— *Squire.*] 1714–1766. A fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, afterwards Bishop of St. David's. A very able champion of orthodoxy, and a good linguist.

#### V.

Written (says Mason) 'a short time previous to the election of a High Steward of the University of Cambridge, for which office the noble lord alluded to made an active canvass.' It is printed entire, as it ought to be if printed at all. The absence of a commentary, on the other hand, requires no apology.

#### VI.

The subject of this very personal epigram was a Mr. Etough, of the University of Cambridge, and Rector of Therfield, Hertfordshire, and of Colmworth, Bedfordshire; a gentleman as remarkable for the eccentricities of his character as for his personal appearance. The lines were originally written under an etching of Mr. Etough's head, presented to Gray by a Mr. Tyson. (Mason.)

## ANALYSIS OF METRES.

'The English language adapts itself to verse not, as in the Latin, by quantity, but by rhythm.' In other words, when we analyse any given metre in English verse, what we have to look for is not the number of feet or of syllables, but the number of *accents* (*ἀποτελέσματα*). In the following pages, accordingly, the student will rarely meet with the terms spondee, trochee, anapaest, &c., which occur so frequently in the ordinary treatises on English versification. The Analysis follows the order of the poems as arranged in this edition. The accented syllables are represented by —, the unaccented by u.

I.

The 'Ode on the Spring,' like III., consists of rhymed stanzas of ten lines each. In each stanza lines 2, 4, 10 have three accents each, the rest having four. There are five rhymes in each stanza, arranged in the following order: *a b a b c c d e e d*—

[*Example.*]

2.	v -   v -   v -   v -
4.	v -   v -   v -   v -
6.	v -   v -   v -   v -
8.	v -   v -   v -   v -
10.	v -   v -   v -   v -

II.

The 'Hymn to Adversity' consists of six rhymed stanzas of eight lines each. The first seven lines in each stanza have four accents each, the eighth having invariably six accents—commonly called an Alexandrine. There are four rhymes in each stanza, arranged in the following order: *a b a b c c d d*—

[*Example.*]

-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v
v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-
-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v
v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-
-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v
v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-
-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v
v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-
-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v
v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-	v	-

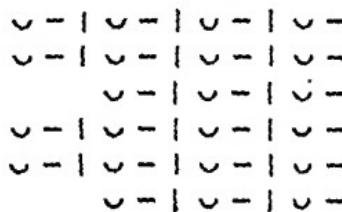
## III.

The metre is identical with that of I.

## IV.

The 'Ode on the Death of a Cat' consists of seven rhymed stanzas of six lines each. The third and sixth line in each stanza have three accents each, the rest have four. There are three rhymes in each stanza, arranged in the following order: *a a b c c b*—

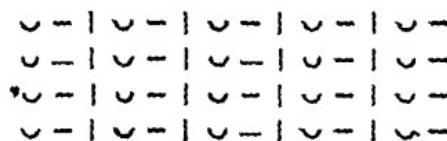
[*Example.*]



## V.

The 'Elegy' is written in the decasyllabic quatrain, or four-line stanza, though, for the reason assigned in the preface, it has been printed as a continuous poem in the present edition. The number of accents in each line is uniform throughout. There are two rhymes in each quatrain, arranged as follows: *a b a b*—

[*Example.*]

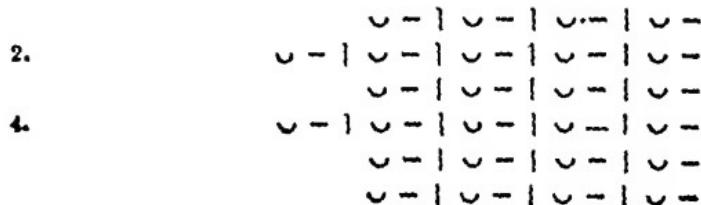


## VI.

The 'Progress of Poesy'—the first of the Pindaric Odes—has usually been divided into three ternaries containing three stanzas each, called respectively the Strophé, Antistrophé, and Epode [= Strain, Counter-strain, and After-song]. Of these the two former uniformly consist of twelve lines each, the Epoles consisting uniformly of seventeen lines each.

[*Example.*]

(1) Strophé and Antistrophé.



7.	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
9.	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
12.	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -

(a) In every Strophé and Antistrophé the second, fourth, seventh, and ninth lines have five accents each, the twelfth has six accents, and the rest four each.

(b) In every Strophé and Antistrophé there are six rhymes, arranged in the following order: *a b b a c c d d e e f f*.

### (2) Epodes.

5.	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
7.	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
10.	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -
	~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -   ~ -

(a) The first eleven lines in each Epode (1. 5 excepted) have four accents each, the next four are in the metre of the 'Elegy,' the sixteenth has five accents, and the seventeenth has six.

(b) In each Epode there are eight rhymes, arranged in the following order: *a a b b a c c d d e e f f g g h h*.

N.B. The student should observe the recurrence of the double or *feminine rhyme* in the seventh and tenth lines of each Epode.

## VII.

The 'Bard,' like the 'Progress of Poesy,' consists of three ternaries, each containing three stanzas or strophés. The first two stanzas in each ternary uniformly consist of fourteen lines each, and the third uniformly of twenty lines.

[*Example.*]

(1) Stanzas I. and II.

1.

(a) In the first two strophes of each ternary the first five lines with the eighth have four accents; all the rest have five each—the last excepted, which is uniformly an Alexandrine.

(β) There are seven rhymes in each strophe, arranged in the following order : *a b a b c c d d e f e f g g*.

(2) Of the twenty-line stanza.

(a) In the longer stanzas there are four lines with three accents each; viz. 1, 2, 4, 5: five having four accents each; viz. 8, 15, 16, 17, 18. All the rest, the last excepted, have five accents each.

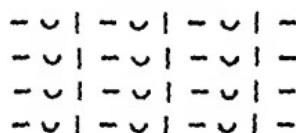
(b) There are ten rhymes in each of the longer stanzas, arranged in the following order: *a b c b a c d e e d f g f g h h i i*.

N.B. Lines 15 and 17, it is to be observed, do not rhyme with any of the other lines, but stand alone, containing each in itself a *homoioteleuton*: e.g. Enough for *me*: with joy I *see*.

### VIII.

The 'Fatal Sisters' consists of sixteen quatrains or verses of four lines each, there being four accents and seven syllables in each line. The rhymes are alternate, as in V.

#### [Example.]



### IX.

The 'Descent of Odin' is written in lines of four accents each, with coupled rhymes. The number of syllables varies between eight and seven.

### X.

The rhythm of this fragment—which, says Mr. Morley, 'is partly imitative'—is identical with that of IX.

### XI.

In this fragment, which is otherwise identical in rhythm with the two preceding, the line of eight syllables is the exception, the line of seven syllables the rule.

### XII.

In an 'Ode for Music' we expect irregularity of rhythm. It would be useless to attempt an analysis of the structure of this Ode.

## APPENDIX.

## I.

A legitimate 'Sonnet' (on the model of Petrarch, says Mason), of which Gray's is an example, consists of fourteen lines, with a pause at the end of line 8. Each line has five accents. There are four rhymes, arranged in the following order: *a b a b a b a b c d c d c d*.

## II.

A solitary example in Gray—the 'Epigram' excepted—of the heroic couplet of five accents.

## III.

The 'Long Story' consists of thirty-seven four-line stanzas, each line containing four accents, with alternate rhymes. N.B. These are often *double or feminine*.

## IV.

This 'Sketch' consists of six lines of four accents each and coupled rhymes. Metrically speaking, each line contains either four *amphiambuses* or three with an iambus.

[*Example.*]

1 and 2.	˘ - ˘   ˘ - ˘   ˘ - ˘   ˘ - ˘
3, &c.	˘ - ˘   ˘ - ˘   ˘ - ˘   ˘ -

## V.

In 'The Candidate' we have an example of what is called the 'anaesthetic measure' or triple cadence. Each line contains four accents, and the rhymes are coupled. N.B. Many lines have a superfluous syllable at the end, and many are short of one at the beginning.

[*Example.*]

˘ ˘ -   ˘ ˘ -   ˘ ˘ -   ˘ ˘ -	[acatalectic]
˘ -   ˘ ˘ -   ˘ ˘ -   ˘ ˘ -	[catalectic]

## VI.

This 'Epigram' is written in the appropriate metre, the heroic couplet—of five accents, with an occasional superfluous syllable.

## VARIOUS READINGS.

## I.

vv. 19, 20. 'How low, how indigent the Proud  
How little are the Great!' Orig. MS.

## IV.

vv. 4, 5. In the first edition the order of these two lines is reversed.  
 v. 14. *angel*] 'beauteous' in first edition.  
 v. 24. *averse*] 'a foe' in first edition.  
 v. 25. *looks*] 'eyes' MS.  
 v. 35. *Susan*] 'Harry' in first edition.  
 v. 36. This line stood thus in the first edition:—'What fav'rite has a friend?'

## V.

v. 2. *winds*] 'wind' MS.  
 v. 8. *and*] 'or' MS.  
 v. 19. *or*] 'and' MS.  
 v. 24. *or*] 'nor' MS.  
 v. 35. *await*] 'awaits' M.S.  
 vv. 37, 38. 'Forgive, ye Proud, th' involuntary fault  
If Memory to these no trophies raise.' MS.  
 v. 39. *aisle*] 'ile' MS.  
 v. 47 *rod*] 'reins' MS.  
 v. 79. *rhymes*] 'rhimes' MS.  
 v. 81. *spelt*] 'spell't' MS.  
 v. 82. *elegy*] 'epitaph' MS.  
 v. 87. *cheerful*] 'clearful' MS.  
 v. 92. 'Awake and faithful to her wonted fires,' first and second editions.  
 v. 100. 'On the high brow of yonder hanging lawn' Orig. MS.  
 vv. 101–101. 'Him have we seen the greenwood side along,  
While o'er the heath we hied, our labour done,  
Oft as the woodlark piped her farewell song,  
With wistful eyes pursue the setting sun.' Orig. MS.

v. 106. *he would*] 'would he' MS.

At the end of the MS. of the Elegy, Gray wrote the following stanza, preceded by the word *insert*.

'There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year,  
By hands unseen are show'rs of violets found;  
The redbreast loves to build and warble there,  
And little foot-steps lightly print the ground.'

VI.

- v. 1. 'Awake, my lyre, my glory, wake' MS.  
v. 2. *rapture*] 'transport' MS.  
v. 11. 'With torrent rapture see it pour' MS.  
v. 23. *dark*] 'black' MS.  
v. 30. *sport*] 'sports' MS.  
v. 34. *in*] 'the' MS.  
vv. 52, 53. 'Till fierce Hyperion from afar  
Pours on their scatter'd rear his glitt'ring shafts of war'  
MS.  
v. 93. *horror*] 'terror' MS.  
v. 108. *bright-eyed*] 'full-plumed' MS.

VII.

- v. 63. *victor*] 'conqueror' MS.  
v. 64. *his*] 'the' MS.  
v. 65. *no—no*] 'what—what' MS.  
v. 69. 'The swarm that hovered in thy noontide ray' MS.  
v. 70. *morn*] 'day' MS.  
v. 82. *a baleful smile upon*] 'a smile of horror on' MS.  
v. 87. *ye*] 'grim' MS.  
v. 90. *holy*] 'hallow'd' MS.  
v. 101. *thus*] 'here' MS.  
v. 102. 'Leave your despairing Caradoc to mourn' MS.  
v. 103. *track*] 'clouds' MS.  
v. 104. *melt*] 'sink' MS.  
v. 105. *solemn scenes*] 'scenes of Heav'n' MS.  
v. 106. *glittering*] 'golden' MS.  
vv. 109, 110. 'From Cambria's thousand hills a thousand strains  
Triumphant tell aloud, another Arthur reigns' MS.  
vv. 111, 112. 'Youthful knights and barons bold,  
With dazzling helm and horrent spear' MS.  
v. 117. *Her—her*] 'a—an' MS.

VIII.

- v. 15. *sword*] 'blade' MS.  
 v. 17. *Mista, black*] 'Sangrida' MS.  
 v. 18. *Sangrida*] 'Mista, black' MS.  
 v. 23. *blade*] 'sword' MS.  
 v. 31. *Gondula and Geira*] 'Guirna and Gondula' MS.  
 v. 44. *shall*] 'must' MS.  
 v. 50. *blot*] 'veil' MS.  
 v. 59. *winding*] 'echoing' MS.  
 vv. 61-63. 'Sisters, hence, 'tis time to ride :  
     Now your thundering falchion yield ;  
     Now your sable steed bestride' MS.

## IX.

- v. 11. *fruitless*] 'ceasless' MS.  
 v. 14. *shakes*] 'quakes' MS.  
 v. 23. *accents*] 'murmurs' MS.  
 v. 27. *voice*] 'call' MS.  
 v. 29. *my troubled*] 'a weary' MS.  
 v. 35. *he*] 'this' MS.  
 v. 41. *yon*] 'the' MS.  
 v. 48. *reach*] 'touch' MS.  
 v. 51. *once again*] 'prophetess' MS.  
 v. 52. *propheteless*] 'once again' MS.  
 vv. 59, 60. These originally stood as vv. 51 and 52 now stand in the text.  
 v. 65. *wondrous*] 'giant' MS.  
 v. 74. *aicake*] 'arise' MS.  
 v. 77. *that—flaxen*] 'who—flowing' MS.  
 v. 79. *tell me whence*] 'say from whence' MS.  
 v. 83. 'The mightiest of the mighty line' MS.  
 v. 87. *hence, and*] 'Odin' MS.  
 v. 90. *has*] 'have' MS.  
 v. 92. *has reassumed*] 'reassumes' MS

## XI.

- vv. 27-30. Not in first editions, but added by Mason from author's MS.
- 

## APPENDIX.

## II.

- v. 2. *barren*] 'flinty' MS.  
 v. 21. *blooming*] 'vernai' MS.  
 v. 55. *hearens*] 'skies' MS.  
 v. 56. *scent*] 'catch'  
 v. 106. *neighb'ring*] 'distant'

## ABBREVIATIONS EMPLOYED IN THE NOTES.

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Par.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Paraphrase.
Cf.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Compare.
Scil.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Scilicet.
Vb.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Verb.
P. p.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Past participle.
v., vv.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Verse, line; lines.
Loc. cit.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Loco citato, as quoted.
'P. L.,' 'P. R.'	.	.	.	.	.	.	'Paradise Lost,' 'Paradise Regained.'
A.-S.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Anglo-Saxon.
D.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Dutch.
Ger.	.	.	.	.	.	.	German.
Lat.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Latin.
Grk.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Greek.
O. E.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Old English.
M. E.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Modern English.
O. Fr.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Old French.
N. Fr.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Modern French.
O. H. G.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Old High German.
N. H. G.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Modern High German.
It.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Italian.
Sp.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Spanish.

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